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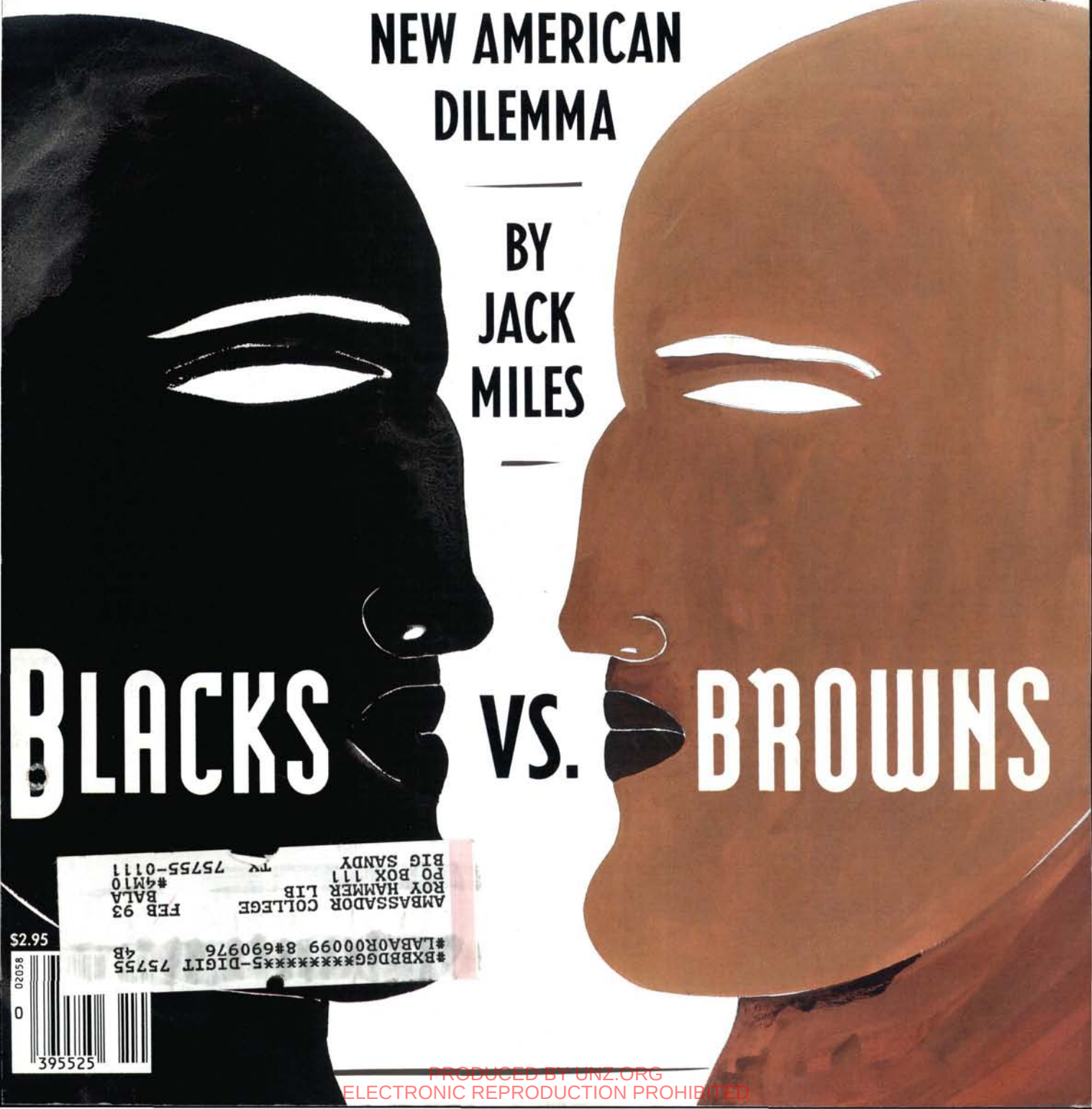
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ANTHONY BURGESS ON D. H. LAWRENCE / A VISIT WITH BILL CLINTON

IMMIGRATION AND THE NEW AMERICAN DILEMMA

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Volvo station wagons offer cupholders only as an option.

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You can't fit an entire soccer team in a Volvo wagon.

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add-on or an afterthought.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety studies the fatality rates in accidents for most cars sold in the U.S. Since they began publishing reports, Volvo has had among the lowest fatality rates in each of its respective model categories.

Which may be a good reason for Jill Wieder, mother of two, owning a Volvo. Wieder is a member of a Los Angeles car pool where she says four out of five families drive Volvo wagons.

Cecily Heavenridge is another person with a compelling argument for driving a Volvo. Two years ago, her husband Keith was in a serious accident in a Volvo and walked away. Since then, they've bought a new Volvo sedan and a wagon, which Cecily affectionately calls, "the tank."

Which is something we take as a compliment.

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VOLVO

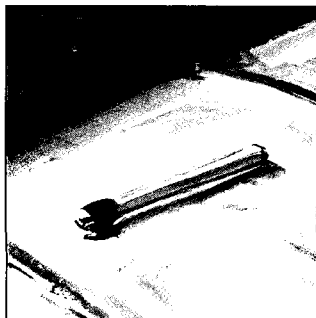


When you consider
how many people get in
car accidents each year,
when you consider how
much time you and your
family spend on the
road, you have to ask,
do car buyers have their
priorities in order?

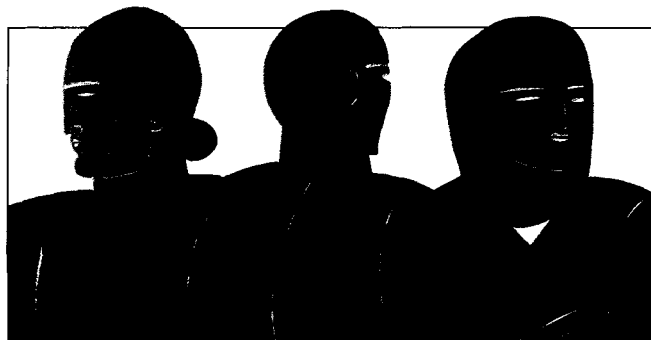
THE SEDUCTION OF MINIVANS VERSUS THE LOGIC OF A MINITANK.



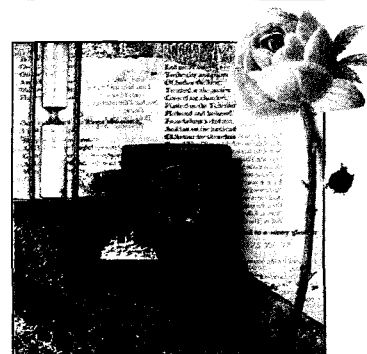
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The conventional interpretation of last spring's Los Angeles riot was that it grew out of black frustration over joblessness and police brutality. But the riot was also, in a sense, about illegal immigration. Latinos are dislodging poor blacks from every kind of workplace, and the conflict between the two groups is becoming more widespread and more intense.

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In 1988 conservatives "hoped guardedly" for the best from a Bush Administration. But after the experience of the past four years, their disappointment with the President is compounded by a sense of betrayal.

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"The biographer's genius," the author writes, "lies in having the sympathy and imagination to create the story of a life about which the subject's ghost would say, 'That's as close to me as anybody else could be expected to get.'" An essay on the art of telling someone's story.

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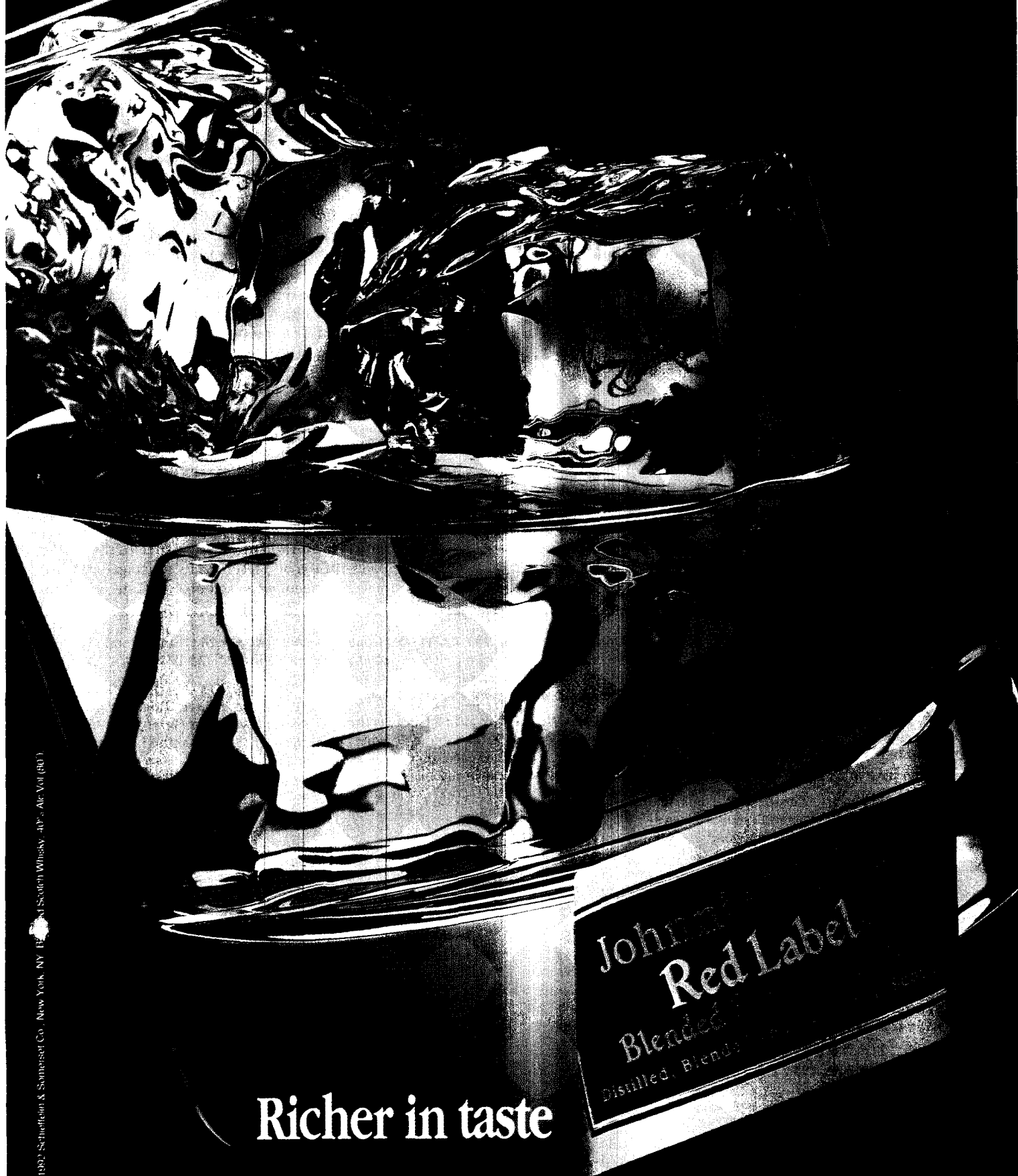
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Cover illustration by
Karen Barbour

Here's to the richness of Red.



Richer in taste

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NOT ALL THE good things go together—pluralists from Machiavelli to William James to Isaiah Berlin have insisted on this corollary of their creed. If the ends of life are many, if values are truly and irreconcilably plural, then it follows not only that values will clash—liberty with equality, say—but also that tragedy is rooted in the very fabric of being. The human situation, therefore, often comes down to choosing not only between good and evil but also between irreconcilable goods.

In the national crucible of Los Angeles, to bring philosophy down to a particularly troubled piece of earth, Jack Miles offers a case in point: the clash between America's quest for racial justice, on the one hand, and its historic openness to the tired and the poor from other lands, on the other.

Miles's cover article in this issue applies a classically pluralist outlook to the Los Angeles riot, but it also looks beyond that event to explore questions raised by the riot which well-meaning people usually avoid as inflammatory: Can the country continue to allow illegal immigrants to displace native-born African-Americans in the tightening labor markets of our big cities? And if it cannot stop the in-

flux, then what is the answer to this terrible complication of the American dilemma?

Miles, who writes for the *Los Angeles Times*, has thought deeply about such moral tangles for years: as he put it in a recent conversation, he "spent the 1960s almost to the day" as



Jack Miles

an aspiring member of the Society of Jesus. In the end he was not ordained, but in the course of the "intellectual athleticism" of his Jesuit education he did receive a Ph.D. in Near Eastern languages from Harvard. His specialty there was the Old Testament, but his biblical interests have since broadened. He is now at work on a book called *The Lord God: A Literary Biography* (to be published by Alfred A. Knopf), which will seek to portray the personality of God as revealed in both the Old and New Testaments.

Those volumes convey a world view fundamentally different from the picture Miles limns here of the causes and meanings of the most destructive domestic riot in our history. The Bible, after all, is the epic of good versus evil. For the interpretive precedents of Los Angeles one must turn to the Greeks, and specifically to the conflict of good versus good presented by the tragedians, the haunting moralists of secular civilization. —THE EDITORS

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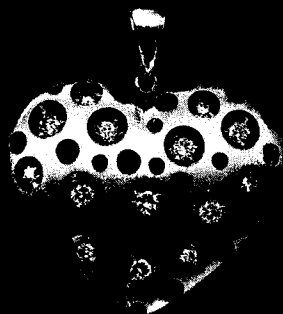
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SUBURBAN CENTURY

I'd like to quibble with William Schneider's brilliant analysis of the 1992 campaign ("The Suburban Century Begins," July *Atlantic*).

The population shift to the suburbs crossed a critical line in 1970, not 1990. The 1970 census was the first in which the proportion of Americans living in the suburbs (37.6 percent) was larger than the proportion living in the cities (31.4). Richard Nixon, running for re-election in 1972, understood who was leaving the cities, why, and in what numbers. As Thomas and Mary Edsall show in their book *Chain Reaction*, Nixon moved his politics in the direction of the white suburbs in the 1972 campaign. For example, he dropped his so-called Philadelphia plan, a precursor to minority set-asides, because he knew it had no place in the center-right coalition that included new white suburbanites.

Further research shows that Nixon appealed directly, through federal revenue sharing and other programs, to urban mayors who were more in touch with the working-class and middle-class white ethnic Catholics leaving the cities. He courted Rizzo in Philadelphia, Gribbs in Detroit, Alioto in San Francisco, Yorty in Los Angeles, and others who skipped the Democratic convention that year. (The appeal helped Nixon win Pennsylvania and Michigan and take California easily—something he did not do in 1968.)

When Schneider talks about security's being the "prevailing imperative of suburban life," he need look no further than Nixon's law-and-order re-election theme, and the men like Frank Rizzo who embodied it.

S. A. PAOLANTONIO
The Philadelphia Inquirer
Philadelphia, Pa.

William Schneider's article on the "suburbanization" of American politics detailed much interesting de-

mographic data. I wonder, however, whether his characterization of the suburban political ethos is more stereotypical than accurate.

Having lived all my life in the suburbs of New Orleans, I contest his claim that "people want to be confined to their houses and their cars" for security reasons. On the contrary, many move to the suburbs to be able to stroll with the dog, play outside with the children, or share a drink with a neighbor in security on that front porch that Schneider claims doesn't exist.

Some would chastise those who flee urban centers because of violence or higher taxes, but political reality is what counts in elections. The suburbs (and thus the suburban political perspective), whether we like it or not, have become the majority in a republic based on majority rule. In response to this new majority, perhaps the Democrats should be urged not to pursue a strategy per se but rather to represent the suburbanites who have abandoned the national Democratic leaders.

DONALD S. GERVAIS JR.
Chalmette, La.

William Schneider says that for most of the twentieth century "Americans have been getting out of the cities as soon as they can afford to buy a house and a car." Wrong. They began to get out of cities as soon as the interstate-highway folks put expressways through the cities that would make driving to work feasible.

In the 1940s plenty of city people owned cars, but very few drove to work. Why? Driving to or from work meant threading narrow streets crowded with streetcars, buses, and automobiles, and intersected every few hundred feet by cross streets. For the employee, it wasn't worth the struggle. But more important, if he did drive to work, he would find no place to park. Like the corner grocers of those days, employers provided no parking space at their establishments.

YOU DON'T GO BACK TO BASICS. YOU TAKE THEM FORWARD.

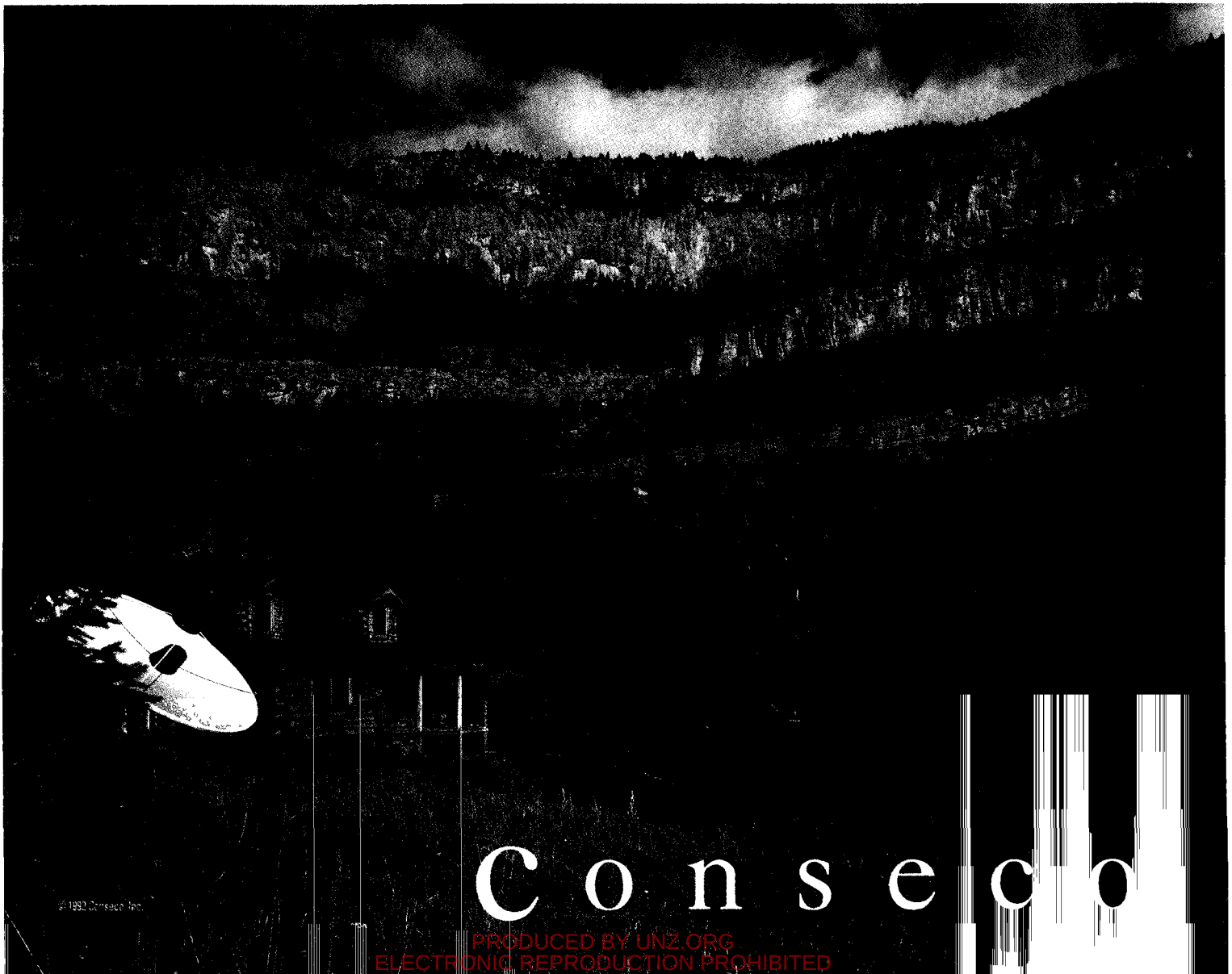
There is a curious shift in business these days, "back to the basics." And it seems as if the sophisticated fast-trackers of the '80s have been transformed into the business fundamentalists of the '90s.

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The basics. By taking them forward, they've taken us forward. To where we are today, to where we'll be tomorrow.



C o n s e c o

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In the 1950s, when the interstates were built, all this changed. Whatever the interstate highways were intended to be (a transcontinental system, perhaps), these roads came to provide limited-access expressways within metropolitan areas. The high cost of land and construction in cities suggests that most of the spending on interstates was for roads within metro areas. Inter-urban links were cheap trimmings to broaden support for the construction effort.

As expressways made driving to work feasible, employers were constrained to provide parking for workers, and then Americans moved to the suburban parts of metro areas.

SHERMAN A. BAKER
Austin, Texas

William Schneider did not stress enough the damage done by the "voodoo economics" of the Reagan-Bush era. Government statistics tell us that the rich have become richer and the poor poorer. Homeless Americans can wander the streets and alleys, but they cannot vote. They may have become officially invisible even to the Census Bureau. The conservatives have effectively disenfranchised a large portion of the voting public.

Election machinery has come increasingly under the control of the pols and the big-money interests. Even in presidential elections half the voters do not go to the polls, because they have been discouraged by the continual string of disappointments, election after election. Promises ring hollow, even in this "kinder and gentler" decade. And a string of scandals involving politicians and bankers and corporations has served to reinforce the cynicism with which many view the electoral scene.

Schneider explains the coming ascendancy of the suburbs in determining the winner in November. An obvious reason for it lies in the fact that, proportionately, the wealthier groups in suburbia vote more frequently than the impoverished voters in the inner city. Impoverished parents with undernourished and sick children may lack the time or energy to go to the voting booth. In effect, our democracy is being undermined by economic factors. I'm certain that this is not what the Founding Fathers envisioned as their concept of a democratic nation.

BERNARD FORER
Sarasota, Fla.

William Schneider describes Reagan Democrats as "liberal" on economic issues and "conservative" on social issues. Those who hold such positions generally endorse government intrusion in both economic and personal matters. Schneider correctly terms such people "populists."

In contrast, those who tend to be fiscally conservative and socially liberal are described by Schneider as "the antithesis of populism." It would be more accurate to describe people who advocate less government intrusion in both economic and personal matters as libertarians, or at least as having libertarian tendencies. Libertarians are the antithesis of populists. Please do not be reluctant to use the libertarian label. As the suburban century continues, "libertarian" will become more and more a household word.

R. KIDWELL
Baton Rouge, La.

William Schneider replies:

I agree with S. A. Paolantonio that the roots of the Republicans' suburban strategy can be seen in Richard Nixon's Silent Majority campaign of 1972. The driving force at that time was racial fear, which was a potent force among urban white ethnic voters. The Republicans built their suburban base in two stages—the social-issue backlash of the 1960s and early 1970s, and the tax revolt of the late 1970s and 1980s.

My feeling is that antitax sentiment has been more important than racism in keeping the suburbs loyal to the Republican Party, although it is sometimes difficult to make the distinction. That theory may be tested in this year's campaign. Under George Bush the Republicans seem to be losing their appeal to suburban voters on taxes and the economy. The party may be tempted to resort to racial resentment.

In his abortive campaign Ross Perot showed significant support among suburban voters, but I do not think his appeal had anything to do with race. Perot promised to make government work. As I explained in my article, that is what most suburban voters want. They believed Perot could do it because he was not a politician.

When Perot announced his decision not to run, in July, two thirds of his support went to the Democrats. The overlap between Perot and Clinton was more suburban than southern. Despite

the presence of two southerners on the ticket, the Democrats are pursuing a suburban strategy in this election.

What Senator Albert Gore Jr. adds to the ticket is not southern appeal. Clinton already has that. Gore's strength is among suburban voters, particularly because of his commitment to environmental protection. Gore is well regarded by independents and Republicans, who are less positive toward Clinton. Gore helps Clinton break into the suburban vote that went to Paul Tsongas in the Democratic primaries. That's why Clinton treated Tsongas with such solicitude at the Democratic convention. The Tsongas vote, not the Jerry Brown vote or the Jesse Jackson vote, is the key to Democratic victory.

Sherman Baker is correct to call attention to the interstate highway system as an important factor in the suburban population boom. But it was one of many factors. In his book *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (1985), the historian Kenneth T. Jackson described the key economic factors behind suburbanization: high per capita wealth, cheap land, low-cost construction methods, inexpensive transportation ("For the first seventy years of the twentieth century the real price of both cars and fuel fell"), and enormous government subsidies. Those subsidies included not just highways but also utilities, mortgage insurance, and enormous tax breaks for homeowners. Jackson concluded that Americans moved to the suburbs because "low-density housing was a good deal."

SENATE WOMEN

Wendy Kaminer, in her lengthy piece "Crashing the Locker Room" (July *Atlantic*), devotes only one sentence to what seems to me the most significant particle of data in the "women in politics" discussion: the female majority among registered voters. Kaminer and her sources refer often to the problems of swaying "the electorate" and "the voters," speaking as if female politicians face an immovable mass of male balloteers. In one less-obscure instance Kaminer quotes Pat Schroeder's verdict on how something like the Gulf War impeded progress: "The testosterone is flowing, and everyone's cheering." The obvious fact that there is more estrogen than testos-

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terone in America's voting booths is, once again, ignored. Why are the real numbers given such negligible consideration? If we truly want to understand the obstacles women candidates face, we might study the reticence of American women to elect other American women to office, rather than chase the handy chimera of the male minority's hormones. A great number of ordinary males are quite weary of the corrupt boys in Washington; we wish the girls at home who keep voting for them would stop blaming us for the evils of incumbency.

WEBB HARRIS JR.
Casselberry, Fla.

As a Washington reporter who, among other things, covered Senator Margaret Chase Smith for almost two dozen years, I found it surprising that the senator from Maine rated not so much as a mention in Wendy Kaminer's "Crashing the Locker Room." Smith is the first woman in U.S. history to have won election to both the House and the Senate. She is the first woman to have had her name placed in nomination for the presidency by a major political party. But she is remembered best for having stood up to Senator Joe McCarthy first—while her male colleagues cowered beneath their desks. I recall a comment from Bernard Baruch that if a man had made the "Declaration of Conscience" denouncing the tactics of McCarthyism, "he would be the next President of the United States."

DONALD R. LARRABEE
Bethesda, Md.

Women have one great problem when they run for political office: other women won't vote for them.

WALT BUESCHER
Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

Wendy Kaminer's statement that "data indicate that equally small numbers of voters would or would not vote for a woman on account of her sex" is at odds with much available research. Although growing numbers of Americans want to see more women in Congress, and even a woman in the White House, there is still a sizable segment of men and women who won't vote for any woman, no matter how well qualified.

A November, 1991, Times-Mirror study, for instance, reports that 69 per-

cent of adults now want to see more women in Congress. The same study also indicates that 24 percent disagree with the idea that the United States would be better off if more women served in Congress. A March, 1992, Gallup poll conducted for *Life* magazine reported that 61 percent of adult Americans hope that the United States has a woman President in their lifetime. On the other hand, more than a quarter of the sample doesn't want to see a woman President. An analysis of these and other surveys conducted in the past several years indicates that about 20–30 percent of male voters and 15–20 percent of female voters would still not vote for a female candidate over a male candidate.

This bias factor makes it essential that women running for office attract enough female voters of both parties (and independents) to create a gender-gap advantage. That is apparently exactly what happened in a number of primary elections this year.

GEORGE A. DEAN
Southport, Conn.

Wendy Kaminer's otherwise excellent treatment of women's difficulties in getting representation in the Senate makes one serious error that many similar articles have made. It says that minority men "have even less representation in the Senate" than white women, implying that the Senate is a hundred percent white. Dan Inouye and Dan Akaka would be surprised to hear that, I'm sure. Our two senators from Hawaii, both Asian-American, have been outspoken and effective, albeit lonely, voices for people of color in the Senate. Kaminer's slight of them was a serious omission.

DAVID ARI BIANCO
Stanford, Calif.

After reading Wendy Kaminer's article, one would be hard pressed to understand the smashing victories last spring of the senatorial candidates Carol Moseley Braun, in Illinois; Lynn Yeakel, in Pennsylvania; Jean Lloyd-Jones, in Iowa; and Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, in California. Clearly, something important is going on. What is it, exactly?

First, women are running for high offices in record numbers. They are doing so because they have the experience, the desire, and the support to do

so. They gained experience over the past two decades in business, social service, and politics; their desire to run was fueled by Anita Hill's mistreatment; and that mistreatment persuaded women activists to support other women's campaigns.

Second, women are running credible campaigns. With the end of the Cold War, women are no longer handicapped if they lack detailed knowledge of missile throw-weights. They can talk about the things they care about, which are the same things most voters—especially women—care about, such as jobs, education, health care, and the rest of the domestic agenda.

Third, women are taking on the right opponents. Braun's Democratic opponent, Senator Alan Dixon, was the only northern Democrat who supported Clarence Thomas—and he also opposed most abortion rights. Yeakel campaigned against Republican Senator Arlen Specter, one of Hill's worst tormentors, even though his name did not appear on the Democratic primary ballot. These races stand in stark contrast to the 1990 Senate races, when six Republican women ran against pro-choice, liberal Democratic men like Paul Simon, Bill Bradley, and Claiborne Pell.

Fourth, women candidates are connecting with women voters. Something quite remarkable is taking place at campaign rallies for women candidates: women voters who have never felt a connection to a politician are forming strong emotional bonds as they discover the possibility that someone in high public office could share their frustration, rage, hopes, and dreams.

Finally, women are simply getting lucky. Braun benefited from a three-way race where two men split the majority of votes, as did Yeakel and Boxer. Braun's victory gave Yeakel an unexpected boost, and Yeakel's victory did the same for Boxer.

Women candidates have something very powerful going for them in 1992: they can be accused of many things, but creating the catastrophic mess in Washington is not one of them.

ROBERT FERTIK
ANTONIA STOLPER
White Plains, N.Y.

Wendy Kaminer replies:

Several readers address the question of whether women voters will elect women candidates on account of their

sex. Webb Harris and Walt Buescher suggest they will not; Robert Fertik and Antonia Stolper believe they will. Both positions are simplistic, assuming that women voters are monolithic—which they're not. Sex interacts variably and often unpredictably with race, economics, age, religion, ethnicity, and even geography, not to mention ideology, as I observed in my piece. Moreover, since only recently have significant numbers of women begun running for high office, it is probably too soon to tell how voters will react to equal numbers of equally well funded male and female candidates. Before we blame women for voting for men, as Mr. Harris does, we should remember that they don't always have an option.

I do, however, agree with Mr. Harris that women voters share responsibility for whatever crooks and incompetents are elected. (We could elect good men as easily as bad.) I disagree strongly with Mr. Fertik's and Ms. Stolper's assertion that women are not to blame for our current crises: by action or inaction, as citizens and voters if not officeholders, women have collaborated in the creation of our "catastrophic mess." And, despite Pat Schroeder's quip about testosterone, I don't believe that men are inherently untrustworthy or that they are slaves to their hormones, any more than women are. (Nor, I suspect, does Schroeder—and they say feminists lack a sense of humor.) Nor do I believe that the world would be a kinder, gentler place if women were in charge, though it would probably be a fairer place for women.

Of course, women in politics (and most other occupations) encounter considerable bias, as George Dean observes. Indeed, part of my piece was a discussion of the problems of bias and stereotypes. I simply included a reference to the testimony of women candidates, based on polling data, that a majority of voters don't vote one way or another purely on account of sex. I also pointed out that polling data about vot-

er bias may have limited value: some people are guided by unconscious biases in the voting booth, and some people are conscious enough of their biases not to admit to them.

Finally, I apologize to David Ari Bianco and any others I offended with my clumsy reference to minority males. I'm also sorry to have slighted the memory of Margaret Chase Smith, although I was not writing a history of

corner. The African National Congress cannot simply effect a military takeover against a well-organized and well-equipped South African Defence Force. Neither strikes nor boycotts can force the government to concede all ANC demands. There is a great deal of violence—but most of it derives from struggles that pit blacks against blacks. The politics of ethnicity is a fact of life.

This is all very interesting. The two of us have said all this before, in works such as *South Africa: War, Revolution or Peace?* (1978), *Why South Africa Will Survive* (1980), and, most recently, *Hope for South Africa?* (1991), and have received only hostility for our predictions. In *South Africa: War, Revolution or Peace?* we insisted that "hopes for a violent overthrow of the South African system—either by foreign invasion or by internal or external guerrilla assaults—belong to the realm of military fantasy." We explained that apartheid must end, that South Africa should turn to a genuine free-market economy, and that socialism has uniformly failed. We pointed out that South Africa had long ceased to be an economic colony, and that models of "neo-imperialism" could not be applied to South Africa, which by that time was already engendering the bulk of its capital within its own borders, from local sources. "Reform in South Africa will come from within," we predicted. "It will derive from the ruling nationalist party rather than from a divided opposition. . . . [This] party is being transformed by those social and economic forces that shape

and reshape South African society as a whole." The reformists derive from business, the professions, and the upper reaches of the defense establishment, and have lost faith in apartheid and wish "to strengthen the country's industrial power . . . and create a wider social consensus."

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women in the Senate; other women senators and important congresswomen were unmentioned as well.

ADVICE & CONSENT

Conor and Patrick Cruise O'Brien deserve commendation for their article "Better But Not All Better" (*July Atlantic*). They agree that ongoing changes in South Africa are not just cosmetic. Revolution does not stand around the

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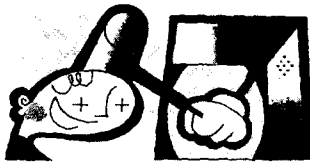
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luxury class (this model not available in California). ³Automobile Magazine, April 1992. ⁴Autoweek, April 1992. ⁵Urban Science Applications, Inc., 1992. Based on past performance. ©1992 Mercedes-Benz of North America, Inc., Montvale, N.J., Member of the Daimler-Benz Group.

THE OCTOBER ALMANAC

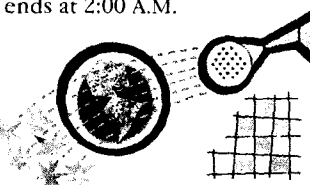


ARTS & LETTERS

October 1, Ted Turner launches his fifth national cable television channel, the Cartoon Network. (His four other channels are the TBS Superstation, TNT, CNN, and CNN Headline News. Turner also owns a big regional sports channel, Sports South, and TNT/Latin America.) The Cartoon Network will offer 24-hour-a-day programming selected from Turner's burgeoning cartoon library, which includes the work of Hanna-Barbera (*The Flintstones*, *The Jetsons*), of MGM/UA (*Tom & Jerry*), and of Warner Bros. prior to 1948 (*Bugs Bunny*). Because Turner Entertainment Corp. owns the distribution rights to these cartoons, independent stations and national networks will need to apply to Turner for permission to show them. 15, applications are due for the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, which is held every four years in Fort Worth, Texas. This year, for the first time, pianists in the competition will be allowed to choose their own repertoire, with no restrictions on period or composer.

THE SKIES

October 11, Full Moon, also known this month as the Hunter's or Dying Grass Moon. 21, the Orionid meteor showers peak tonight, as Earth crosses the orbital path of Halley's Comet. Look for them just before moonrise in all parts of the sky. 25, New Moon; Daylight Saving Time ends at 2:00 A.M.



GOVERNMENT

October 1, the 1993 fiscal year begins. The caps on spending required under the five-year federal budget agreement of 1990 grow progressively stricter; the increase in domestic outlays in 1993 will probably be less than 5 percent. Earlier this year Congress rejected a proposal to break down the "wall" between defense and domestic spending erected in the budget deal; this would have allowed savings from defense spending to be applied to domestic programs. 5, the Supreme Court convenes. In an unexpected move last June, the Court put off until this term its decision on *Bray v. Alexandria Women's Health Clinic*. At issue is whether court injunctions against anti-abortion protesters who block access to abortion clinics are legal under the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, which outlaws conspiracies to deprive people of their civil rights.



ENVIRONMENT

One species of tree will carry the idea of "fall" to an extreme this month. In temperate climes the ginkgo, a non-native tree widely planted around the country, usually drops virtually all its leaves on a single day in October. Predicting the day has become a sport in some locales. The leaves are of more than passing interest to medical researchers: numerous clinical trials have suggested that an extract of the tree's leaves has great potential for treating the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, asthma, hearing loss, vertigo, sluggish circulation, gangrene, and hemorrhoids. The ancient ginkgo, which Darwin and many after him have termed a "living fossil," is originally from China, where it has been regarded as a sacred healing plant for centuries.



FOOD

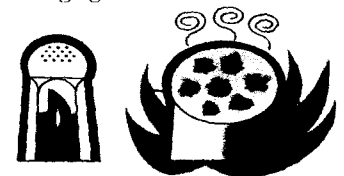
The Defense Department's Global Positioning System became generally available this year as an aid to farmers, and this month, with the corn, soybean, and grain harvests under way, it is being used by some 150 farmers in all parts of the country. The GPS is a network of navigational satellites that allows users to pinpoint their location on Earth with a high degree of accuracy. Farmers can use small receivers mounted on their combines to receive readouts of their location which are accurate to about three feet. Computers combine that information with crop-yield data from sensors on board the combines to create a complex map of the productivity of each section of land. The map will become the key to "farming by the foot," guiding the farmers' allocation next year of seeds, water, fertilizers, and pesticides. The precision farming that GPS makes possible can cut chemical inputs by as much as a third; the necessary equipment costs about \$10,000. The Defense Department does not charge for the service.

Q & A

Why are some surnames deriving from colors (Brown, White, Green) extremely common, while others (Red, Yellow) are quite rare?

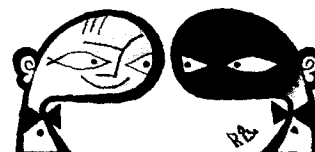
The disparity originated in medieval custom. Some 10 percent of English-language surnames began as nicknames, generally relating to physical appearance or personality; included in this category are col-

or names, which as a rule referred to complexion or hair. The ubiquitousness of Brown—the fourth most common surname in the United States, after Smith and various forms of Johnson and Williams, according to 1974 data collected by the Social Security Administration—is thus explained by the frequency of dark hair and swarthy complexions. The colors red and yellow did give rise to their share of names, but in forms that may not be immediately recognizable: Reed, Russell, and Kilroy are among the many surnames derived from the Old English root *read*, for "red," and Blount, Blondel, and Golden come from roots for "blond" or "yellow." Green is in a different class: it did not, of course, describe a person's skin or hair, but denoted someone who lived at or near the village green.



25 YEARS AGO

Robert Coles, writing about urban race riots in the October, 1967, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "One ghetto youth likened the process to a stew, with one ingredient following another—until 'it's there, all done and boiling away.' Start with centuries of slavery and its persisting consequences, and add widespread Southern poverty with the resulting shift of millions of bewildered, hungry people from a rural to an urban situation. Add television, with its ability to bring news immediately and vividly to an incredibly wide audience, to 'illiterate' people who nevertheless can see and 'get the picture.' Throw in hot weather and a confusing war that has stalemated much of the progress that was being made or could be made. . . . Then suddenly the explosion comes."



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REPORTS & COMMENT

LITTLE ROCK

A Visit With Bill Clinton

The conflict between the "A student" and the "pol"

DURING THE Democratic primary campaign Governor Bill Clinton's verbosity became a strange part of his "character problem." To the average voter, his endlessly detailed answers sounded confusing and therefore deceptive. Among journalists they raised the suspicion that he was trying to placate every interest group—point two will reassure the feminists, point three will appeal to blacks—rather than projecting consistent, principled views. The economic plan that Clinton released in June intensified this problem.

It listed a huge variety of positions but did not resolve contradictions among them or say which were the more important. For instance, the plan called for big increases in public investment, which sounds good—but proposed to pay for them mainly through unspecified defense cutbacks and the ever-elusive "administrative reforms."

This was sensible politics—being only as specific as absolutely necessary. The trick during a campaign is to find that narrow zone in which your positions are not so hazy that they're laughable but are still vague enough that most people can agree with them. "We can do better" always fits right in the zone, as do recommendations for "change" and much of the Clinton plan.

In an effort to ask Clinton about what lies behind the six-point checklists with which he answers questions whenever he can, several representatives of *The Atlantic* went to Little Rock to interview him. We also hoped to see at close range how well he was bearing up under the rigors of the campaign.

Part of the "convention bounce" he enjoyed may have been the subliminal recognition of how much sheer wear and tear he had survived. Paul Tsongas could not have withstood the physical demands of a full campaign; George Bush probably couldn't if he didn't have the White House apparatus to prop him up. Ross Perot quit when the press coverage went mildly sour. Bill Clinton kept on plugging.

Clinton has resisted the vindictiveness that comes naturally in political campaigns. As a law of nature, politicians hate the press. Most end up thinking that there's some special reason the press discriminates against them. Mario Cuomo is notably touchy about anti-Italian stereotypes, Lyndon Johnson was ruined by the suspicion that the Ivy Leaguers were looking down on him, Patricia Schroeder thinks she's not taken seriously because she's a woman, Richard Nixon knew that the liberal Jewish media establishment was after him. Clinton has actually been the victim of anti-southern "Bubba" prejudice,



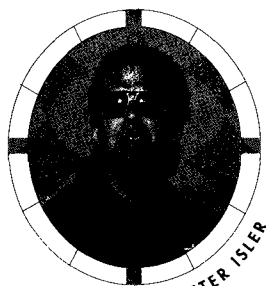


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AT THE HELM



Peter Isler, age 37, is the country's top match-racing skipper. An Intercollegiate Sailor of the Year at Yale, he won the 1992 French Open and navigated *Stars & Stripes* to America's Cup victories in 1987 and 1988. Isler lives in San Diego with his wife, J.J., who won a bronze medal sailing at Barcelona.

"I started sailing on Long Island Sound at age 13. My interest in match racing was spurred by reading articles about the Congressional Cup, so I made it a goal to sail it. My first step into the Grand Prix—the 10 major events on the world match-racing circuit—was crewing for one of my college teammates, Dave Perry. We competed in the 1983 Congressional Cup and won. My first regatta as a skipper was in 1985—we sailed and won the Gold Cup in Bermuda. The crews on the Grand Prix circuit are the best sailors in the world, because they've become so proficient at handling the boats in tight, aggressive sailing.

"I'd say for most viewers the most interesting time of the race is the four-minute pre-start, when the two boats are jockeying for position. It's sort of a mental chess game on top of a physical wrestling match—preparing for the starting gun when the boats are allowed to cross the line and start sailing the course. In that four-minute pre-start, the battle to gain control is fascinating and oftentimes decides the race. All you need is a few feet advantage to put the nail in the coffin, as long as you sail well from there on out."

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especially during the New York primary. But if it bothers him, it doesn't show.

Clinton was affable, though understandably tired-looking, when we met him in the governor's mansion. He is bigger and bulkier than he looks on TV. Before the Democratic convention Clinton's national TV exposure was mainly through call-in shows and televised debates, rather than the rallies and speeches of the general-election campaign. During these early appearances he sometimes seemed to smile too much and too insincerely, like a game-show host. In person he had the natural charm of the born politician, along with a wryness that does not always come through on TV. By this stage in a presidential campaign a candidate has heard almost every question and can rattle off answers automatically. But a number of times Clinton paused for ten or fifteen seconds before answering a question, and he usually made a good-faith effort to address exactly the question we had raised.

Clinton covered a wide variety of topics comfortably and lucidly. In the few areas in which he hadn't yet worked out a policy—for example, immigration—he said so, and in most other areas he clearly laid out his position, listed the supporting arguments, and dealt with the main objections. In most of the interview we didn't lay a glove on him, and we left with no doubt about his intelligence or detailed operating knowledge of government. But we tried to explore the apparent contradictions in two parts of his economic policy: his plan for dealing with the budget deficit, and his strategy for international trade.

WHEN TALKING about economics, Clinton seemed to be juggling two styles of thought, which was not true when the subject was race or abortion. His economic views, in his policy statements as well as in our discussion, switch between those of the A student and those of the pol. The A student recommends the respectable, well-thought-out policies that will be praised in universities and on editorial pages. The pol is concerned about getting elected and holding coalitions together. For instance: Every A student knows that America should have a much higher gasoline tax. The pol knows that people hate the sound of a gasoline tax, and they'll resist it unless you can tell them that the money

will be used for some purpose they approve of, such as repairing roads.

The contrast between the two personalities is not the contrast between good and evil—between doing the right thing and merely "being political." It's a matter of proportion. Someone who is just an A student, like Michael Dukakis or John Anderson, won't become President—and if he slips through, the way Jimmy Carter did, he'll have a hard time getting politicians to do anything for him. Someone who seems to be just a pol, like George Bush, will be concerned only about holding the coalition together and won't care in what direction it goes. Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson were fundamentally polys, but they had enough interest in policy to keep their coalitions heading in a certain direction. Bill Clinton's answers to us indicated a similar internal balance.

The most pol-like thing Clinton did during the primary campaign was to attack Paul Tsongas, in Florida, as an enemy of Social Security. Tsongas had mentioned in his pamphlet-sized "book" that it might be sensible to hold down the cost-of-living adjustment for entitlement programs. Every A student who has thought about the federal budget knows that if you don't find some way to limit Social Security and Medicare, you will never, ever reduce the budget deficit. Every pol knows that you want your opponent to raise this issue, because no matter how limited and reasonable his proposal may be, you can make it sound like an assault on the entire system. The politics of this issue is maddening to A students, because it has created a welfare mentality in the population at large. Most retirees are now getting much more back from the Social Security system than they have "earned," in actuarial terms. But politicians and the American Association of Retired Persons have encouraged the view that not a penny can be touched—not even if it's for the elderly rich, the Ross Perot of a few years hence who will be fully entitled to his pension and Medicare. As a result, working families pay a regressive and steadily rising Social Security tax to transfer benefits to retirees who are on average richer than their children's generation. One paragraph in Tsongas's book referred to this issue without the usual hedging comments, and the Clinton campaign used it in

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ads portraying Tsongas as a threat to the elderly in general.

We asked Clinton whether he regretted doing this, and what he intended to do about entitlement costs. Here he was clearly aware of the *A-student* position, which is that the Social Security problem represents the conflict of two American ideals. Universal-benefit programs, from public schools to Social Security, are better than targeted programs like welfare, because it's not humiliating to take part in them and because all taxpayers get something for their money; but universal benefits can be unfair when poor people pay taxes to support benefits for the rich. One American ideal is to keep everyone in the same boat; the other is to give help only to those who need it. Today's entitlement system tries to do both.

"What I explicitly said," the governor told us, "was that I thought the way to reform the entitlements was to make upper-income recipients pay more of their load, but that I thought the universality of the entitlement programs was important. It may be an important symbolic issue of fairness to ask older people with higher incomes to pay more for Medicare and to subject most or all of their income from Social Security to taxation. I think you can make that case pretty plainly, that it's important symbolically. But more than that is getting control of health-care costs."

With that we were off on an *A-student* alternative: Clinton's argument that we shouldn't waste our time on Social Security, since the only entitlement costs that really matter are the costs of the health-care programs, mainly Medicare. He said, "The major entitlement reform that swamps everything else—nothing else is even close—is doing what it takes to get health costs into line with inflation." The real reason for this approach must be Clinton's calculation, as a pol, that Social Security is a minefield. But Clinton made an extended *A-student* case for emphasizing medical costs.

"You know that the insurance companies, the health-care administrative costs, and the providers are doing very well in this system, and we have no system for controlling health-care costs," he said. "Health-care costs are going up eleven to twelve percent per annum, while revenues are going up five percent, four and a half. That's basically where the entitlement choke is. So I

say, let's go after health-insurance costs, where the big bucks are, reduce poverty with earned-income tax credits and other strategies, and make the wealthy pay more of their fair share of Medicare."

Is it possible to limit these costs without limiting care—itself as difficult an issue as limiting Social Security?

"That depends on whether we have the courage to reform the system. But the answer has to be yes, if you analyze where the dollars are going in the American system as compared with any other. We spend thirty percent more than any other country and do less with it in terms of basic coverage. It makes you say, Where are the dollars going here that they're not going in other places? It's not so much exotic surgery but prolonged care for people in the last weeks of their life. We do spend more on that than other people do; the problem is, it's hard to know when the last week of your life is.

"But the real dollars are in insurance and administrative costs, where we're sixty or seventy billion dollars out of line with any other country with a comprehensive system. Doctor fees are not so much the problem as the repetition of services is—and the lack of a network of primary and preventive care, which leads too many people to get care only when it's too late and too expensive and at the emergency room, on somebody else's nickel. So if you were to reform those central elements, there's no doubt in my mind that within a matter of just a very few years you could bring health-care costs down in line with inflation." This sounds clean and logical, and it may suffice for the campaign. But Clinton must know that such reforms will be very hard to enact and at best will reduce, rather than solve, the medical-financing problem. And the minefield of Social Security will remain.

THE OTHER unresolved issue in Clinton's economic policy concerns international competition and trade. His plan, which takes its name from his slogan "Putting People First," says that America must be robustly committed to the principle of free trade. But if other nations don't play by these rules, then "we'll play by theirs." This is like saying "We believe in peace, but if we have to, we'll use the F-15s." It leaves out all the details about where and why you would fight.

On this issue the difference between

A students and pols is clear-cut. "We'll play by their rules" implies protectionism, and for *A students* protectionism is always wrong. No respectable national-newspaper editorialist, and almost no academic, will praise a candidate for suggesting protectionist measures—ask Richard Gephardt after his campaign in 1988. The term "protectionist" is less damning than "racist," but it is similar in suggesting a benighted view. In fact every nation practices protectionism of some sort. (The only obvious exception is Hong Kong, and it's not really a country.) Nations vary in how deliberately they plan the policies and which industries they protect, but they all do something. Pols instinctively realize this and know that protectionism can be popular in us-versus-them terms: Who's going to have those jobs in steel mills, the Koreans or us?

Two conflicting world views shape current discussions of trade policy. One might be called the Field of Dreams concept: If we improve it, they will come. The "it" is America's productive infrastructure—schools, research facilities, roads, fiber-optic networks, and the other things that make factories comfortable. "They" are the global corporations that, according to this theory, are no longer attached to any nation but flow rapidly from site to site in the now borderless world. If we prepare properly, the investment will arrive—and it won't matter if it's from Daimler-Benz, Ford, or Toyota, because they're all stateless capitalists now. The other concept, which might be called The World As We Know It, assumes that the borderless future is not quite at hand. Other countries take active steps to promote their own industries—which they continue to think of as their own. In this view the welfare of American workers is tied to the strength of American companies, so in addition to building the schools and fiber-optic systems, the government should care how Ford, Boeing, and Motorola fare. In practice, the difference between these outlooks boils down to the question of whether the government should discriminate in favor of U.S.-based companies, preferring them over foreign competitors when granting contracts, supporting technology, or imposing tariffs.

Probably the strongest case against the Field of Dreams outlook is exemplified by the U.S. semiconductor industry. Every Field of Dreams reform

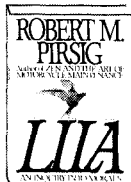


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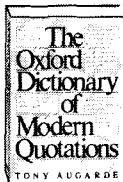
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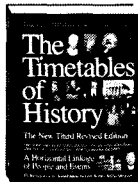
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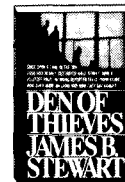
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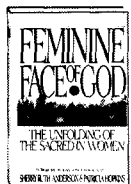
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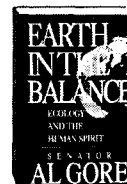
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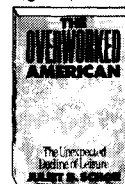
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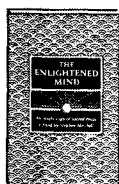
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#021



you can think of for, say, Chrysler had already been applied in Silicon Valley in 1980. Employees were happy and well trained. Companies were run by engineers, not evil financiers. They invested for the long haul, and they had a good infrastructure. Labor relations was not really an issue, because most companies didn't classify the employees as "labor." And over the next five years the industry caved in more rapidly than the steel and auto industries had.

Its successful rivals—first in Japan, then in Korea—were coordinated by their respective governments. Without exception, countries that now have semiconductor industries got their start with government guidance and help. When the American semiconductor industry began, in the 1950s, the U.S. government—specifically the Defense Department and the space program—was for several crucial years the major and sometimes the only customer for its products. When the industry revived in the late 1980s, it did so, yes, because of its own efforts—plus government intervention, in the form of new trade treaties and research consortia.

The conflict between the two views is built into Clinton's campaign. Robert Reich, a prominent exponent of the Field of Dreams concept, is one of his close advisers. But another is Ira Magaziner, a champion of the real-world view. (Lester Thurow, another prominent academic in the real-world camp, is not connected with the Clinton campaign.) The first camp is the *A*-student position; the second is for pols. In most of his campaign statements Clinton has sounded like an *A* student, emphasizing the mobility of capital in a borderless age. We asked Clinton which side he was on. He said that his policy would depend on where he was sitting—in the governor's mansion of a small state or in the White House.

"As a governor, I have to deal with the realities of the global economy—factories moving to Mexico, the acquisition of foreign investment as well as domestic investment. Having lived through this, the conclusion I have drawn is as follows: Money, management, and production are by and large mobile and will become increasingly so. What they can't take away from you are the skills of your people, the quality of your infrastructure, the care and feeding of your natural resources, the work that you do in your own country

on research and development and turning your ideas into jobs at home. Those are the core things.

"Nonetheless, it is still true that it matters who owns significant chunks of your economy. You need a manufacturing base in your own country. That requires domestic policies which reward the companies that are here in research and development and don't subsidize the flight of those jobs overseas.

"I'll give you an example, a good-news bad-news thing. Bridgestone Tires in Japan buys Firestone in America. For Arkansas it's a blessing, because Firestone had two plants here; they were in some trouble. Bridgestone had plenty of money. They came in here, spent thirty million dollars modernizing these plants, retrained the workers, gave them the benefit of modern management, and expanded the work force. It's a good thing. On the other hand, over the long run there will be relatively more upscale R&D work done by that company in Japan than would be the case if it were an American company."

Clinton didn't say how he would resolve the issue, but he showed that he clearly understands the arguments on both sides. (Imagine discussing this with George Bush.) The pol side of this issue probably reflects his true instinct. When Clinton talks about the "middle class," it seems that what he really means is something fairly close to a post-industrial working class (whose members, he knows, would hate being labeled in that way). Several times in our interview he mentioned the working poor, although we didn't ask him about that group; he had just rearranged his economic plan to direct its tax benefits downward on the economic scale. If it's fair to say that every President governs with the welfare of one group particularly in mind, for Clinton that group would be middle-class suburbanites—but from suburbs like Mount Vernon and Torrance, not Greenwich and Beverly Hills, with jobs like secretary and deliveryman, not doctor and stockbroker. Because these people don't consider themselves to be part of a permanent "class" in the Marxian sense, what they would look for from government would be opportunity more than equality: jobs for themselves, and education—especially college—for their kids, much more than tax relief. Presumably that would fit with an expanded and aggressive domestic role for government,

rather than the (mostly theoretical) grand scaling-back of the federal government which we've had since 1981.

WHEN HE discussed subjects other than economics, Clinton displayed much less of the *A*-student-pol division. He spoke at length about race, and his positions* seemed for the most part to coincide with what he had learned firsthand.

We began by asking him what, in his view, were the most dishonest things that blacks and whites say and think about each other.

"I think whites tend to be, on the subconscious level, too willing to believe that there are inherent racial differences, which does not take account of some of the terrible conditions in which blacks and other minorities live in this country. I think that too many whites have underestimated the crushing impact of economic decline and family decline that a lot of black families have been subject to, that would have produced similar results had they occurred among people of any race. And on the other hand, others, including [white] liberals, tend to have expectations that are too low for people, based on their race, so they feel uncomfortable challenging people to do better and disagreeing with them on the basis of ideas.

"It is difficult to generalize about blacks and how they feel, but I think there are too many blacks who blame other people for problems that people can only solve themselves—on occasion. But that is difficult to generalize, because the black church and black community leaders are more and more adopting a kind of dual strategy, which I think is very good. [They say,] 'You know, we've got to make this system work for us. But we've also got to do our part. We've got to change ourselves.'"

And what about whites' understanding of their own racial views? How honest and accurate is it?

"I think at one level most whites think they are free of prejudice. But I don't think that most people have thought through the enormity of the dimensions of the problem, and what kind of action ought to be taken by us as a nation to deal with it. And so I think that a lot of whites have sort of let themselves off the hook—you know, 'I don't wake up every morning consumed with racial hatred. I am, there-

fore, not prejudiced. Therefore there's nothing for me to do or feel or say."

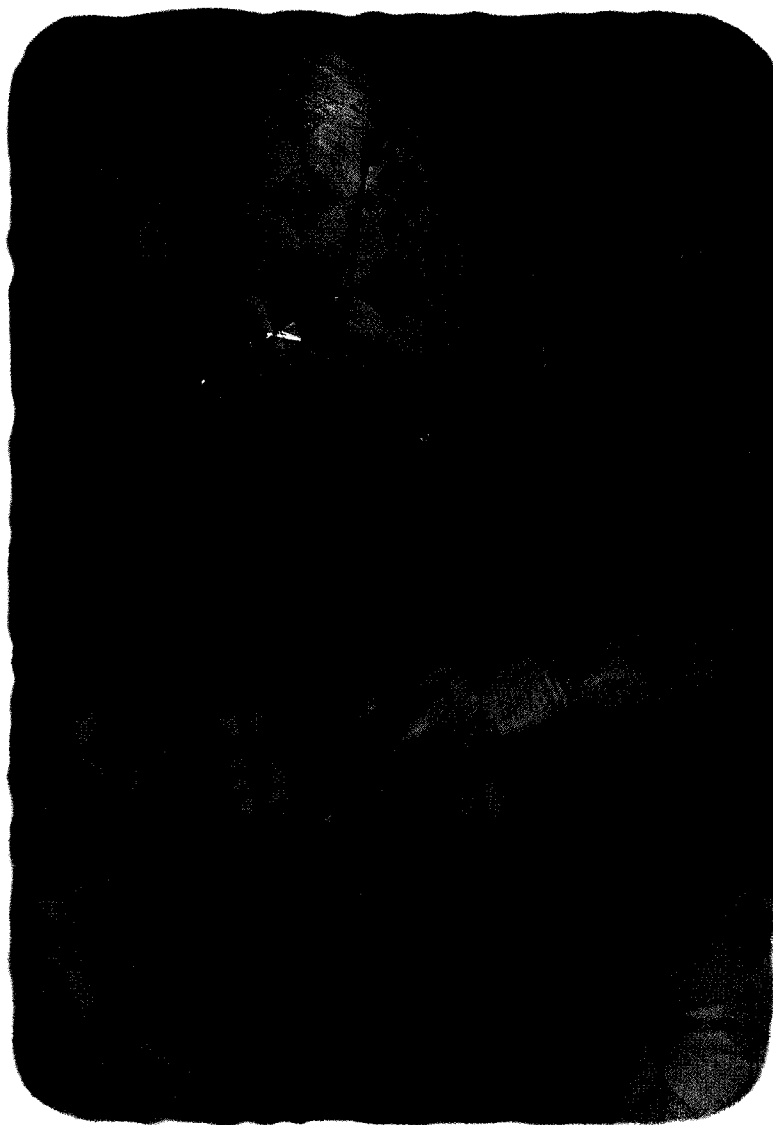
When Clinton was a boy, the race problem was defined as a southern issue, one that centered on an apartheid-like system of separation and denial of legal rights. Now race is clearly a national, not a regional, problem—and we asked Clinton to define exactly what the problem is. "What's wrong," he said, "is that objectively blacks, and to a lesser degree Hispanics, are—profoundly are—worse off than the rest of the country, more likely to suffer from economic and social difficulties that are profound and that make the good life much more difficult."

What, if anything, can a President do about this? Clinton specifically rejected using quotas to enforce "equality as a result," as Lyndon Johnson proposed in his famous Howard University speech in 1965, or expanding civil-rights law, so that disadvantaged groups can more easily use the courts to defend their economic interests.

"I don't think the government in this society is capable of mandating equality of result . . . that the American people should try to mandate a quota system on our society. [As for civil rights laws,] I don't think they are irrelevant. As long as there is a disproportionate impact by race or gender on the difficulties we face, they're not irrelevant. But I think a lot of what we do doesn't have to be race-based. I mean, Social Security wasn't a constitutional right. It was a political decision. We ought to have an election and a political debate in which we say there are several ways in which we are diminishing the capacities of our people and weakening our country."

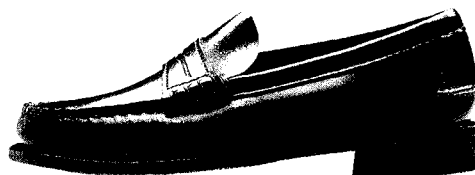
As solutions Clinton emphasized economic growth—with reminders that this is connected to education and trade and infrastructure projects and everything else—and an attempt to change personal values. In the past generation, he said, the government has clearly helped shift attitudes about smoking. Something similar is possible with attitudes toward work and family. Does this mean the kind of "values" speeches that Vice President Dan Quayle was giving in the spring?

"It's okay to talk about values. It is critically important to try to imbue within people a value structure that will change their behavior. But if all you do is talk about values while you pursue policies"—such as, we as-

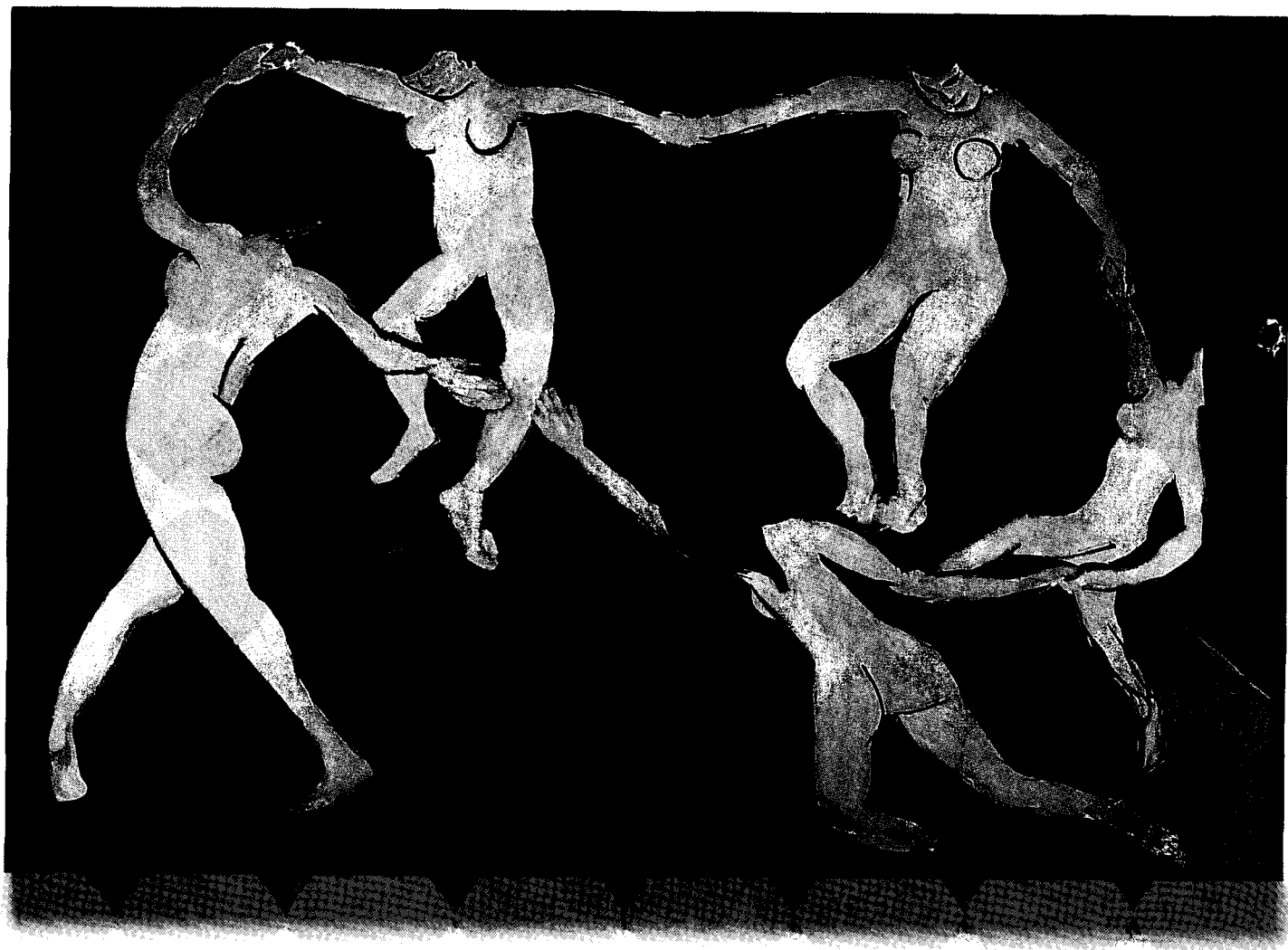


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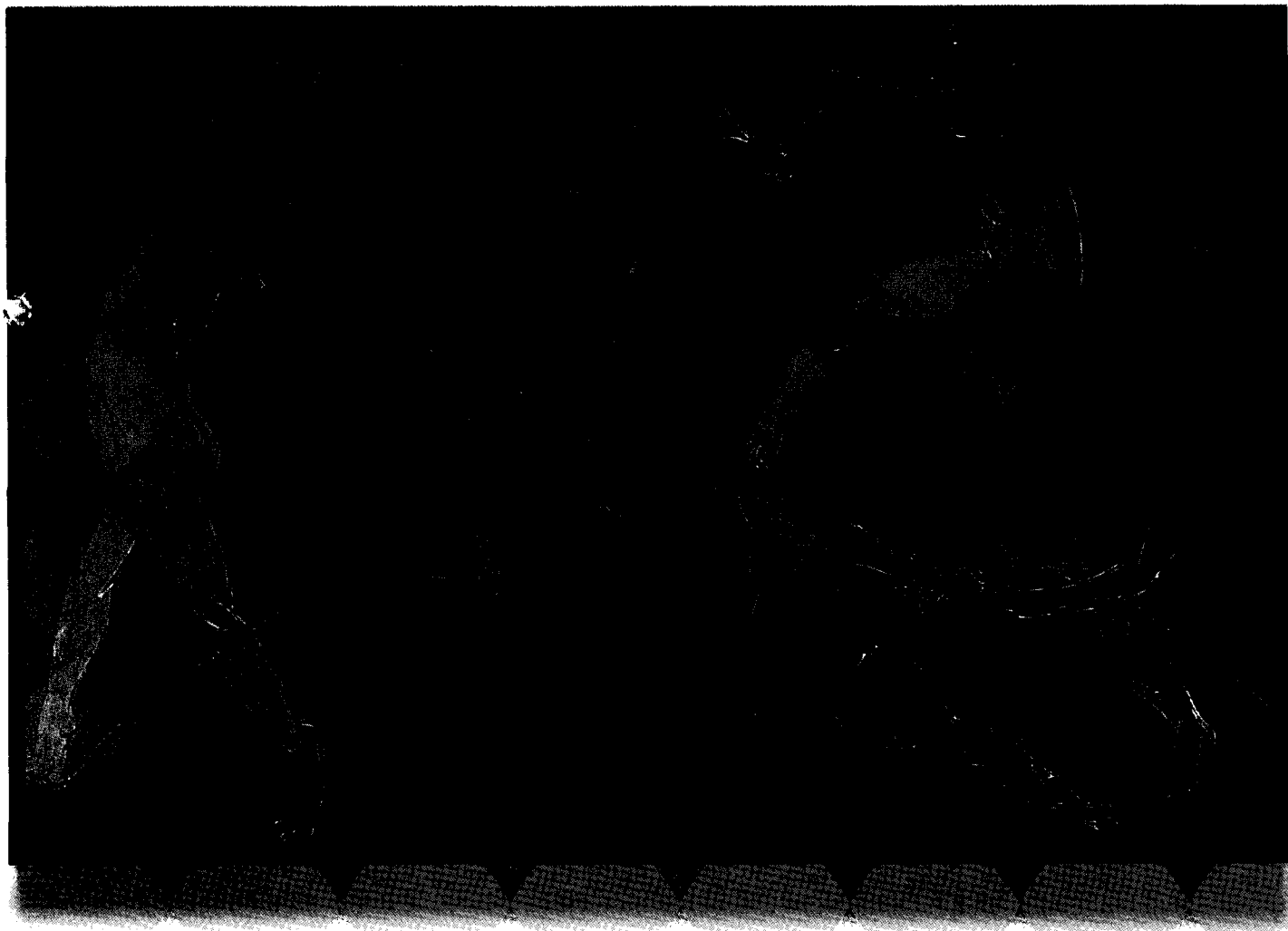

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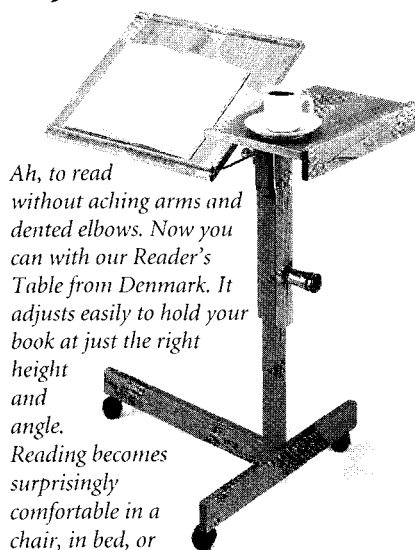


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sumed, tax changes that hurt the working poor—"that you know will aggravate the very conditions you are railing against, then you're being hypocritical. That's my problem with Quayle and Bush. It would suit me fine if they had a minister I admired to the White House once a month, and let him or her talk about values. But the problem is that their behavior is inconsistent with the real world, which requires us to do more than preach about values. It's 'values plus'—it's not only values, it's values plus action that supports those values. And from my point of view, they're 'values minus.' I think the Democrats, or anybody else, would make a great mistake to minimize the impact of this values appeal, but it rings hollow if your policies are inconsistent with the values you espouse."

The racial matter of which Clinton seemed to lack an instinctive grasp was the question of what to do about the problems of the big inner-city ghettos—problems that exist in Arkansas but that are an overwhelming issue in Los Angeles and New York and Chicago. He repeatedly cited William Julius Wilson's 1987 book *The Truly Disadvantaged*, which says that today's ghetto social problems, such as crime, welfare dependency, and family disintegration, are primarily the result of the loss of good manufacturing jobs. Clinton seemed to be using Wilson's book as a kind of talisman, in a way he wouldn't have done with a book about an issue with which he was personally more familiar. For example, he told us that according to Wilson, at the end of the Second World War, when the economies of New York and Detroit and Chicago were strong, the black and white rates for out-of-wedlock birth were about the same. "This is all a phenomenon of my lifetime," Clinton said. In fact Wilson doesn't use this particular statistic; he couldn't, because at the end of the Second World War the percentage of births out of wedlock was eight times as high for blacks as for whites. But Clinton seems to have filed away in his mind a sound-bite-like statement along the lines of "the ghetto underclass was created by deindustrialization."

If Clinton truly took on the underclass as President, he'd surely find, as the past few Democratic Presidents have found, that the ghettos are surprisingly resistant to the good old Democratic medicine of economic growth

and low unemployment. A different approach would be to assume that the ghettos' problems are primarily cultural, and focus mostly on social acculturation programs targeted on high-poverty areas. Pols always want to do some of each—especially Clinton, who seemingly hates having to endorse either side of any complicated issue.

Still, that you can even worry about how Clinton would deepen his understanding of such subjects makes him unusual. He obviously views racial healing as one of the most important jobs for the next President. He also seems to have a sure, centrist sense of the political perils of the issue. In the 1960s, liberals helped destroy the tenuous public support for Great Society anti-poverty programs by making grants to the likes of the Blackstone Rangers, a Chicago gang. Clinton emphasized the need to sustain broad political support:

"I think that upper-middle-class people are ready to be challenged to help people in the cities help themselves. That's why welfare reform has such a powerful resonance in the suburbs. It is not because people want to punish poor people. It's because the experience of people living in the suburbs is that they helped themselves into the suburbs. You speak to the suburbs [and recommend] not maintaining dependence but creating independence. I think that has a powerful resonance, because it makes what you want to do with poor folks consistent with the life experience of middle- and upper-middle-class America."

THE MOST personally revealing answer Clinton gave during our visit concerned Vietnam. First he presented a dull but worthy discourse on the lessons the United States should and shouldn't draw. (We can't fight someone else's war, but we have to be ready to fight some wars.) Then he was asked, "Do you now wish you'd gone?" He paused for quite a while before answering.

"I can't say that. You know, I was raised in the post-World War Two generation. I always kind of wanted to be in the military. I always liked and admired it. And it's something that I missed in a way—that I missed. But to say that I wished I'd gone would require me to rewrite history to an extraordinary extent.

"I had an opportunity that few peo-



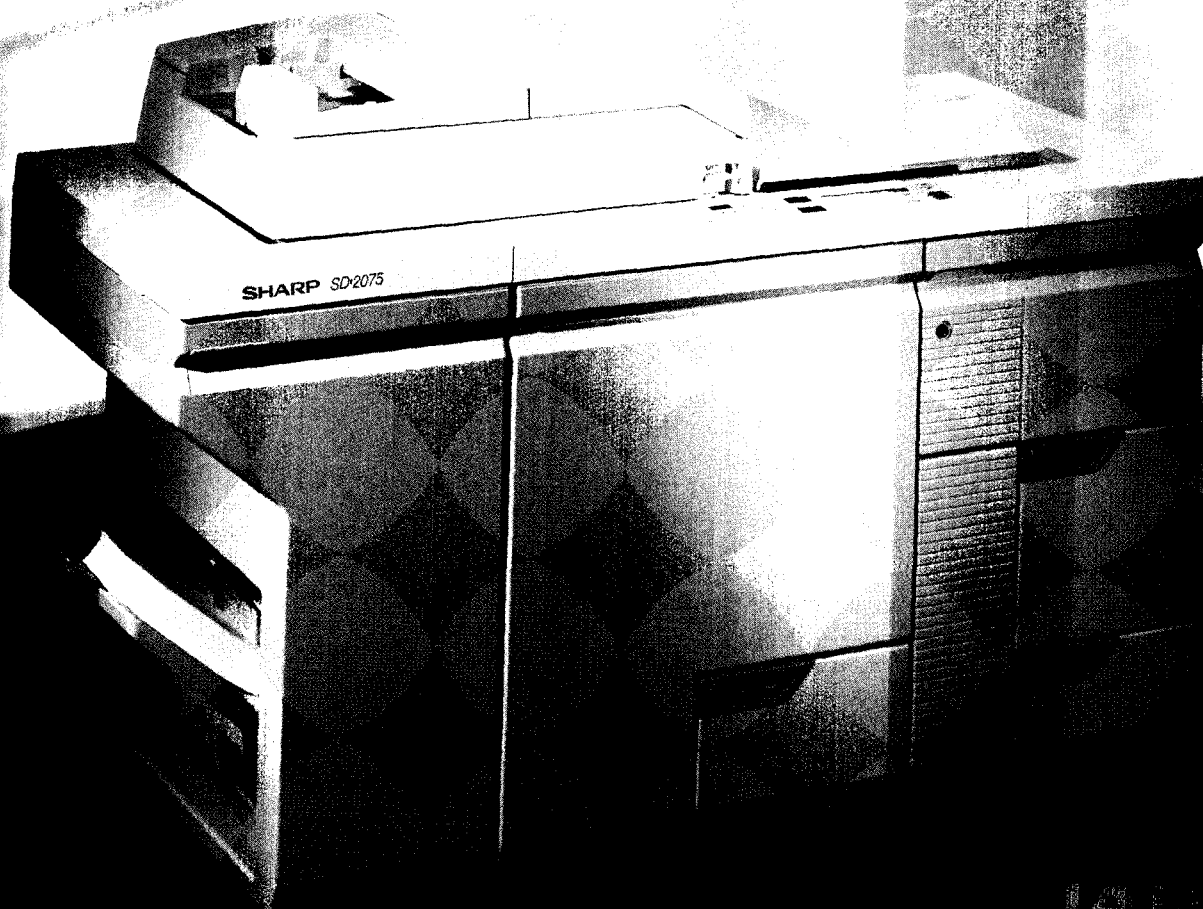
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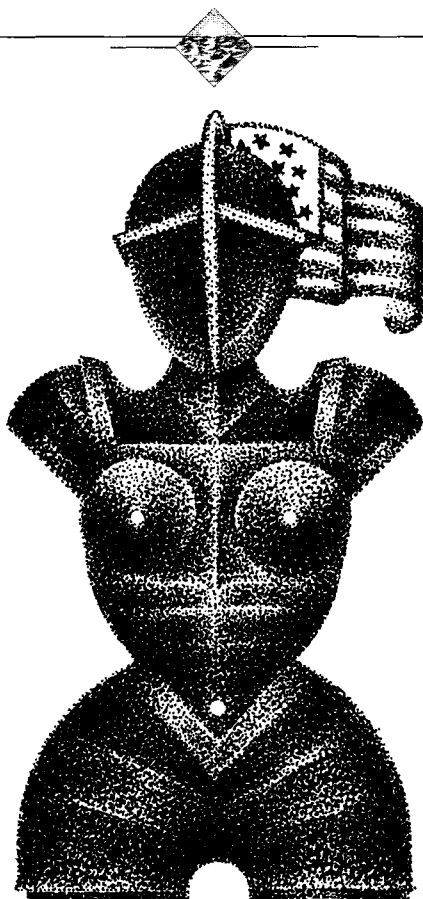
ple of my generation had, because I worked on the Foreign Relations Committee. I had a security clearance. I read six newspapers a day. I sat there through all those hearings. I knew more than most people did—that we weren't being told the truth about how we were doing and what we were doing and what our objectives were. I've often wondered whether I should wish that at that age I didn't know what I knew. But I believe now, just as strongly as I believed then, that our policy was wrong and misguided and that we would have been better off if we had changed it before we did.

"Because I was a kid from Arkansas, a state with a great patriotic tradition, and because I loved my country, I never wanted to feel that I was not patriotic or that my feelings and actions were dictated by just a desire to stay out of harm's way. But I felt—I mean, the passion of my feelings about it was so deep that I think it would be just rewriting history for me to say [I wish I'd gone]. I wish that I'd had the military experience, because I feel that it's an important part of a country to have a strong defense and an honorable thing to do. But the circumstances of that moment were so difficult and unusual that I can't go back and say that I'd rewrite history."

At the end of the interview we gave Clinton another chance to surmount the Jimmy Carter-like problem of having many positions but no identifiable point of view. "If you had to sum up your message for the fall campaign in three, preferably immortal, sentences, what would they be?"

This time Clinton really sat and thought, and then gave us five, with a distinct pause at the end of each sentence: "Our country is in trouble, losing its way economically and coming apart socially. Our government has failed to work for most Americans, favoring special interests and the wealthiest of us only. We need to rebuild America, and to reunite America with policies that put our people at the center of national life, investing in more jobs, basic health care, and world-class education, and with a commitment to pull people together again. We don't have a person to waste, but the problems today are not nearly as great as our lack of faith that we can overcome them. That's the real obstacle."

—The Editors



WASHINGTON

The Battle for Saliency

The abortion issue in this election campaign

"I AM PLEASED with the Supreme Court's decision," President George Bush said in a written statement released after the Court issued its ruling in *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey* on June 29. That was a little surprising, considering that a majority on the Court had just voted to uphold *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 decision giving constitutional status to abortion rights. The same day, Bill Clinton called a press conference to assert that "the constitutional right to choose is hanging by a thread."

Both sides in the abortion controversy rushed to declare defeat. Kate Michelman, the president of the National Abortion Rights Action League, said, "George Bush's Court has left *Roe v. Wade* an empty shell." Abortion-rights leaders called the Court's formal endorsement of *Roe* meaningless. The

Court accepted restrictions on abortion rights which it had struck down as unconstitutional in 1983 and 1986, such as a twenty-four-hour waiting period and an informed-consent requirement.

That did not mollify anti-abortion leaders, however. One of them, Randall Terry, complained that "three Reagan-Bush appointees stabbed the pro-life movement in the back." He was referring to Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, Anthony M. Kennedy, and David H. Souter, who voted to reaffirm *Roe*. Two other Reagan-Bush appointees, Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, argued that the Court should have overturned *Roe*.

What we have here is a muddle. As long as the issue remains muddled, it will not have much impact on the presidential election. Which is exactly what the Republicans want.

That is not what pro-choice and pro-life leaders want. For them, the 1992 campaign is a battle for saliency. They want to heighten their supporters' concern so that the abortion issue will determine a substantial number of votes. Their constituencies have to feel threatened—which is why both sides claimed defeat in the *Pennsylvania* case.

The problem is that most Americans have a muddled view of abortion: they are generally pro-choice, but willing to accept the kinds of restrictions imposed by the Pennsylvania law. That is more or less the Supreme Court's position. The *Pennsylvania* decision was an invitation to voters not to think about abortion, which is exactly what most voters want to do. The battle for saliency means forcing people to think about it, and to vote the issue; it means turning the 1992 election into a referendum on abortion. That has never yet happened to a presidential election.

A lot of Democrats want it to happen this year. As much as the Republicans are playing down the abortion issue, the Democrats are playing it up: they know there are more potential pro-choice voters than pro-life voters. But the campaign has to activate the pro-choice vote. That's why the Democrats showcased their pro-choice platform at the convention in July. They invited Kate Michelman to join the nominees on the podium. "This is one of the things the presidential election is about," Clinton has said.

Republicans don't want the election to be about abortion, and the polls

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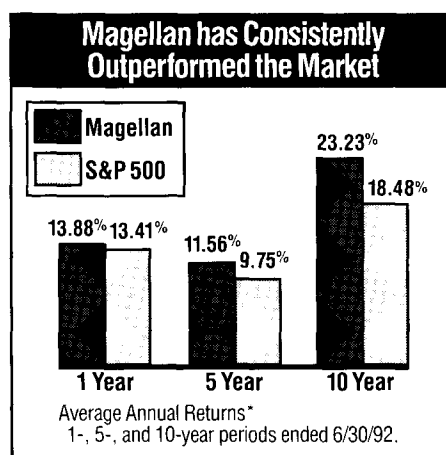
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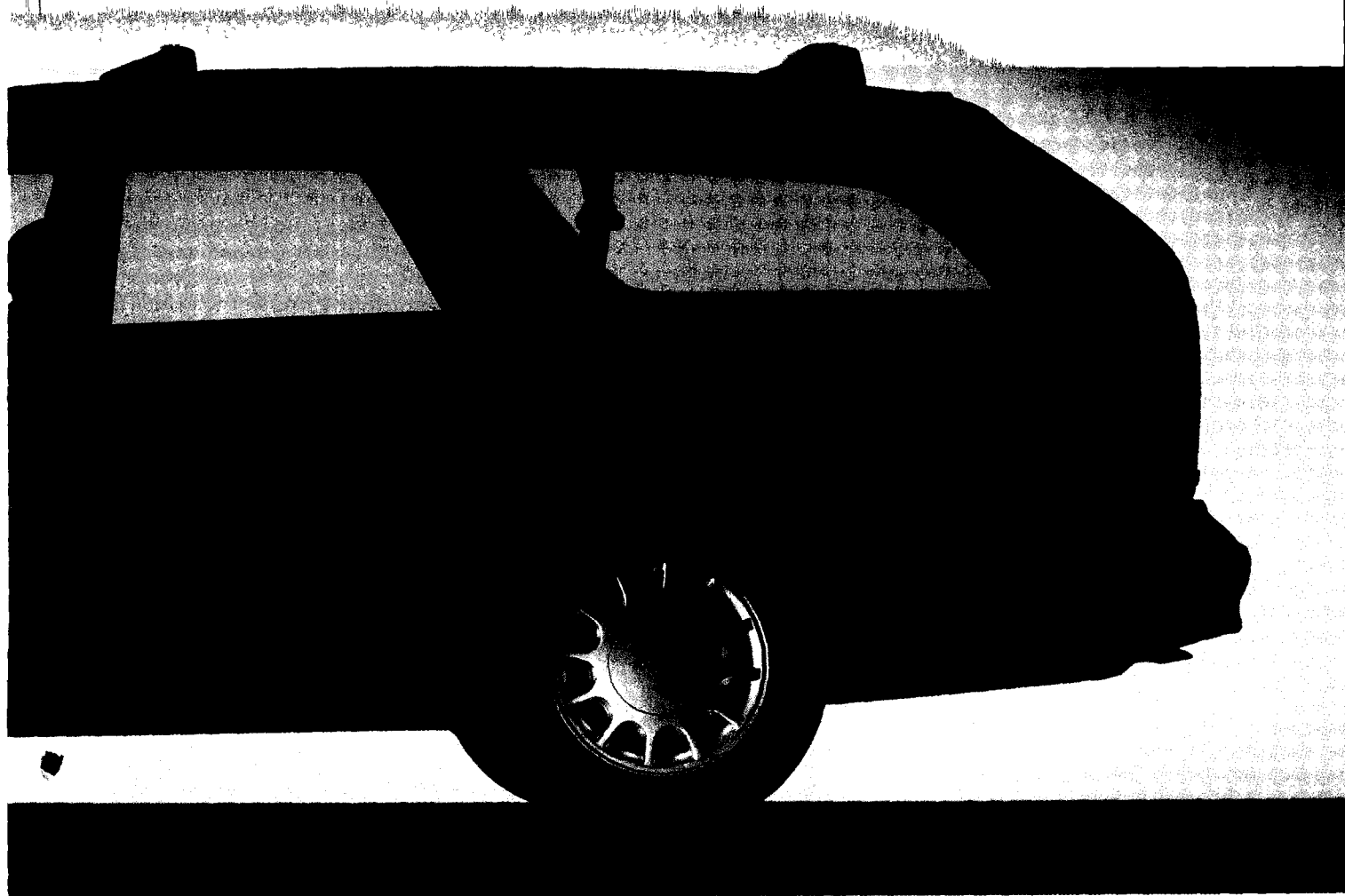
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show why. In May of this year, according to a Times Mirror survey, the American public opposed "changing the laws to make it more difficult for a woman to get an abortion" by two to one. People believed that Bill Clinton was opposed to it as well. By a nearly two-to-one majority, however, they knew that George Bush favored restricting abortion. Bush's position is out of line with public opinion, and the voters know it.

But they have known it for some time. In fact, they knew it about Ronald Reagan, too. What has saved the Republicans from disaster for twelve years is one simple fact: abortion has not been a salient issue to most voters. In January, when the Gallup Poll asked voters to rate the importance of sixteen issues, abortion ended up at the bottom of the list, tied for last place with foreign affairs. As long as voters felt that way, Republicans could expect the same thing to happen this year that happened in 1984 and 1988. Only a small number of votes would be determined by the abortion issue, and those would be mostly on the anti-abortion side. In the two most recent presidential elections, according to the exit polls, voters who said that abortion was a major issue voted disproportionately for Reagan and Bush. The majority of people voting in those elections may have been pro-choice, but abortion didn't determine their votes. Abortion-rights advocates want pro-choice voters to feel threatened in 1992—threatened enough to vote pro-choice.

The sense of threat was very powerful in 1989, after the decision in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*. Pro-choice voters got angry—and they got organized. They were a powerful force at the polls in November of that year. Pro-choice votes were critical in electing a Democratic governor of New Jersey, the first black mayor of New York, and, in Virginia, the first elected black governor in the nation's history.

By 1990, however, the threat to abortion rights no longer seemed imminent. Few states had moved to criminalize abortions. (To date, only two states, Utah and Louisiana, and one territory, Guam, have done so.) The pro-choice impact at the polls seemed to diminish with the threat.

Abortion-rights leaders want 1992 to be another 1989, not another 1988, and for that to happen, pro-choice voters

have to feel threatened again. The *Pennsylvania* case, like the *Webster* case, has to make them angry. But how do you demonstrate to voters that a right just reaffirmed by the Supreme Court is "hanging by a thread"?

You have to remind them that four justices said they were ready to overturn *Roe*. One more vote and *Roe* is history. Justice Harry A. Blackmun, the author of the 1973 *Roe* decision, warned of just that possibility when he wrote, "I fear for the darkness as four Justices anxiously await the single vote necessary to extinguish the light." They may not have to wait long: as Justice Blackmun reminded the country, "I am 83 years old. I cannot remain on this Court forever." And yet the justices appointed by Reagan and Bush voted 3-2 to uphold *Roe*. If Bush is re-elected, will his next Court appointee be another Souter or another Thomas?

The critical electoral consideration is not how many voters are on each side but how many voters on each side care deeply about the issue. Anti-abortion voters have been dissatisfied with the status quo since 1973—and they have voted the issue. Politicians knew it was risky to come out in favor of abortion rights, even if most of their constituents were pro-choice. They knew they would lose more votes from the

anti-abortion minority, most of whom would vote *against* them simply because of their position on abortion, than they would gain from the pro-choice majority, few of whom would vote *for* them simply because of their position on abortion.

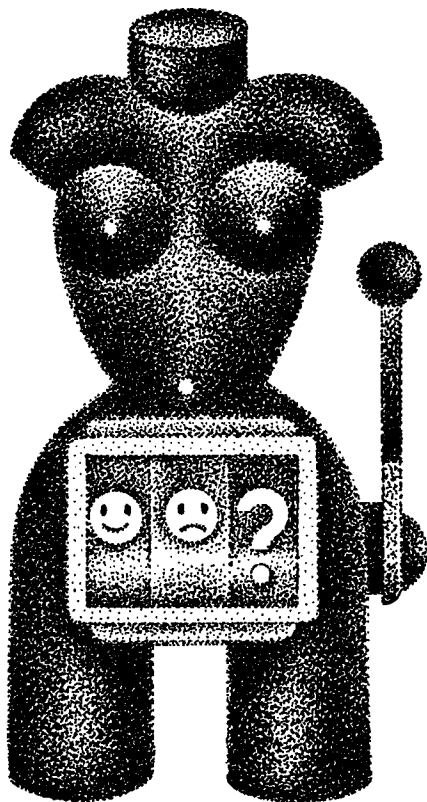
The same rule applies to other divisive issues—gun control, for example. Let's say you take a poll and show a politician that his constituents divide 75-25 percent in favor of gun control. The politician knows what will happen if he votes to support a gun-control law: maybe five percent of the 75 percent majority care enough about the issue to vote for him for that reason alone, but he may lose 20 out of the 25 percent on the other side.

Politicians respond to intensity, not to poll numbers. They want to know what issues matter to the voters, not just how many people are on each side. One pro-choice activist put it this way: "Why are gun owners so politically powerful? There are more uterus owners than gun owners. When uterus owners begin to vote this issue, we will win."

To turn the *Pennsylvania* decision into a voting issue, abortion-rights leaders will have to provide more "spin," which is what they are trying to do. They have sponsored television commercials that dramatize the threat to abortion rights. They are pressuring Congress to pass the Freedom of Choice Act, which would put abortion rights on a statutory basis, and would likely be vetoed by Bush, creating the issue they want.

Abortion-rights leaders can also argue that *Roe* is already dead. They believe *Roe* died with the *Webster* decision, in 1989, when the Supreme Court indicated a willingness to change the standard according to which it scrutinized abortion legislation. In the *Pennsylvania* case the restrictions that six years ago had been held incompatible with *Roe* were judged acceptable. That is why pro-choice leaders call *Roe* an empty shell.

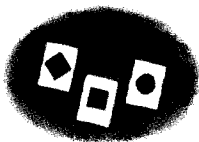
Chief Justice William Rehnquist calls it that too. Speaking for the four anti-*Roe* justices, Rehnquist said the Court "retains the outer shell of *Roe v. Wade*, but beats a wholesale retreat from the substance of that case." He wrote that the *Pennsylvania* decision leaves *Roe* standing "as a sort of judicial Potemkin Village, which may be pointed out to passers by as a monu-





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ment to the importance of adhering to precedent."

Nevertheless, it will be difficult to persuade voters that *Roe* is dead when five justices voted to reaffirm it, and especially difficult because most voters do not disagree with the Court's ruling in the *Pennsylvania* case. Polls showed majorities of 70 percent or more endorsing the restrictions upheld by the Court.

OPINIONS ON abortion have remained fairly stable for the past twenty years. Almost every year since 1972 the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago has been asking people whether it should be possible for a pregnant woman to have a legal abortion under various circumstances. Large majorities have consistently supported legal abortion if the woman's health is seriously endangered, if she has been raped, or if there is a strong chance that the baby will have a serious birth defect.

In most years the public has been opposed to legal abortion if the family is poor or doesn't want any more children, if the woman doesn't want to get married, or if the woman wants the abortion "for any reason." Those are all discretionary circumstances: what people have been saying in these polls is that they do not approve of abortion as a form of birth control.

That may explain why Americans have been uneasy about the status quo under *Roe*—they feel that far too many of the 1.5 million legal abortions performed in this country every year are being done for the purpose of birth control. The public clearly has moral qualms about abortion, believing that it should be allowed only when there is a more compelling moral argument on the other side. To most people, a threat to the life or health of the mother, rape, or a serious deformity in the child are more compelling moral arguments. Birth control is not.

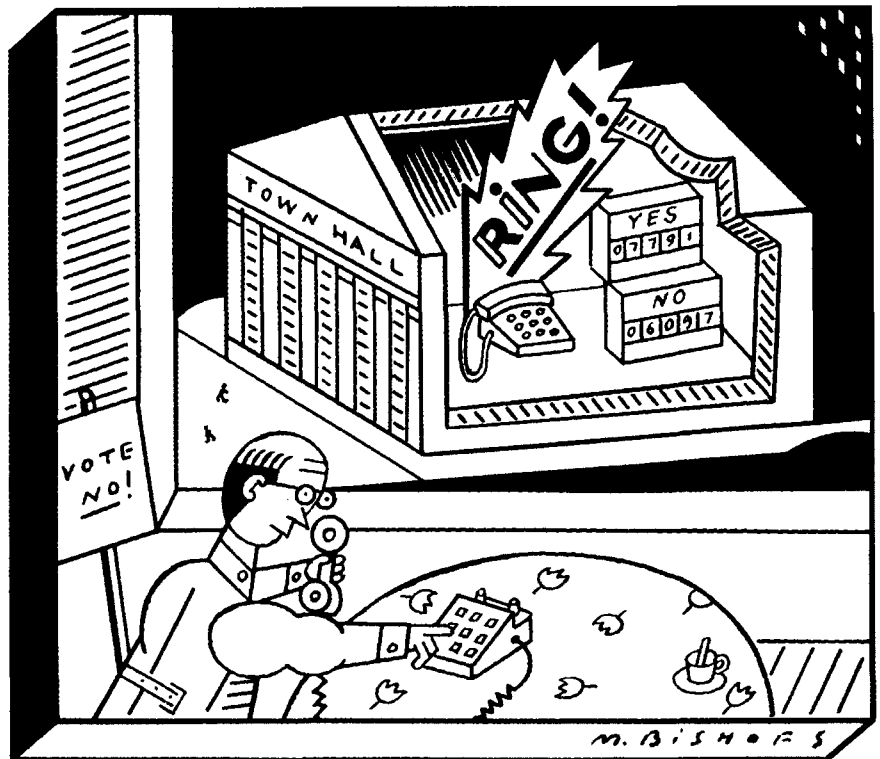
The debate over abortion seems to have no middle ground—except in public opinion. In a Gallup poll taken after the *Pennsylvania* ruling, one third of the people responding thought abortion should be legal "under any circumstances." That figure is up from one quarter before the *Webster* decision, in 1989. Thirteen percent said abortion should be "illegal in all circumstances"—down from 18 percent before *Web-*

ster. Support for abortion rights has edged upward over the past three years. But almost half the public (48 percent) continues to say that abortion should be legal only "under certain circumstances."

Politicians have one thing in common with voters: they don't want to think about the abortion issue. They want to demobilize the debate and get the issue off the agenda. That is especially true for Republicans. President Bush has said, "We have room in our

party for people that feel . . . pro-life or pro-choice. The Democratic Party is the same way." Even though Democrats intend to run on the issue this year, they don't want to get too far from the muddle of public opinion. Bill Clinton told the delegates at Madison Square Garden, "I am not pro-abortion. I am pro-choice." Politicians are doing the same thing the Supreme Court is doing on this issue. They are muddling through.

—William Schneider



WASHINGTON

Teledemocracy

*Ross Perot left the residue of
a good idea behind him: the electronic
town meeting*

THE IDEA OF technologically enhanced national "town meetings" has been around at least since Buckminster Fuller proposed it a generation ago. And it is not likely to go away just because Ross Perot dropped out of the presidential race. The idea deserves serious examination, because if the 1992 election campaign has taught us anything, it is that

most Americans feel alienated from national politics as currently practiced, and there is a need to find ways to reinvolve them. Simply changing the cast of characters may not do the trick. Public-opinion polls show a deep sense of disaffection that reaches well beyond the candidates themselves.

There are long-established precedents for the idea of adding some elements of direct democracy to our representative government. Twenty-three states currently grant their citizens the right to pass directly on items of legislation and even to modify state constitutions by putting amendments on a ballot. (California leads the pack.) In addition, numerous measures, such as school bonds and public-works funding, are regularly decided on by referenda of the electorate. Indeed, the

number of initiatives and referenda has been increasing. A preponderance of the four hundred or so such measures introduced since the Progressives, in the first decades of this century, made them a hallmark of government reform have been introduced in the past twenty years, according to the political scientist Aaron Wildavsky.

To be sure, there is a big difference between adding some direct democracy to our representative system and replacing Congress with TV shows and push buttons. Electronic town meetings, though hardly a cure for all the ills of our democracy, could be arranged in ways that would avoid several of the pitfalls against which critics correctly warn. Or so I will argue.

TWENTY YEARS ago I spent a third of a million dollars—a hefty sum in the early 1970s—of your (taxpayer) money, granted to me by the National Science Foundation, conducting experiments with electronic town meetings. Indeed, they are the subject of an article I published in *Policy Science* in 1972. I have good reason to believe that Ross Perot and his staff did not read my writings on the subject; their model lacked all of the features that I argued were needed to render electronic town meetings even approximately democratic.

To be frank, the NSF team started with the same simplistic notion that seemed to animate Perot: given new developments in cable and interactive television and in telepolling (which allowed incoming calls to be tallied automatically, without anybody's even answering the phone), we could engineer an electronic system that would enable large numbers of people to have the kind of active political participation that town meetings afforded the citizens of New England towns (and that, before them, the citizens of the Greek polis enjoyed). We sold a Columbia University professor of engineering, Stephen Unger, on the idea, and he joined the NSF team.

Having just outgrown the sixties and their notion of direct or participatory democracy, we were clear about one major principle: it would be undemocratic to replace elected representatives and legislatures with computerized voting or any other kind of electronic wizardry. One main reason, which became known by the NSF

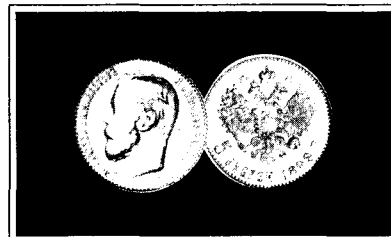
team as the Burke argument (after the political philosopher Edmund Burke), is that large groups need two or more layers of representation, rather than direct representation, in order to work out consensus-based public policies. History has proved that large groups are unable to agree on policies by means of the kind of dialogue possible in a town meeting, where fewer than two thousand people tend to be involved. In a layered system the voters grant their elected representatives "mandates," a kind of generalized guidance that reflects what the voters seek: Get us out of Vietnam. Focus on domestic issues. Do something about competitiveness. The voters neither feel compelled nor wish to be engaged in the specifics.

For the system to work at all, citizens must allow their representatives to engage in give-and-take, within the confines of their mandates, in order to find a shared public policy. If the various mandates have no overlap, no honest give-and-take is possible. Either a stalemate will occur until some parts of the electorate give in, or politicians will fudge, claiming that they are acting within the confines of their mandates while they are actually violating them. Each of these situations, in turn, will lead to policies that lack the support of the public and that contribute to its alienation. A case in point is the Maastricht Treaty, which provides for eventual political unification in Europe. The politicians signed the treaty without a mandate from their people. As a result, voters in Denmark rejected the treaty, and many others are grumbling.

Telepolling, like other forms of direct democracy en masse, provides only limited room for give-and-take. It can be made to work for a few isolated items that can be straightforwardly voted up or down (such as hospital bonds), but not for complex issues of the kind we typically face. Given such issues, direct democracy produces few if any opportunities to work out compromises that most people can feel comfortable ratifying.

For this reason, telepolling should be used to supplement the existing representative government. At the same time, if it was properly conducted, it could serve between elections as a continuous source of information to the legislature about the preferences of the populace.

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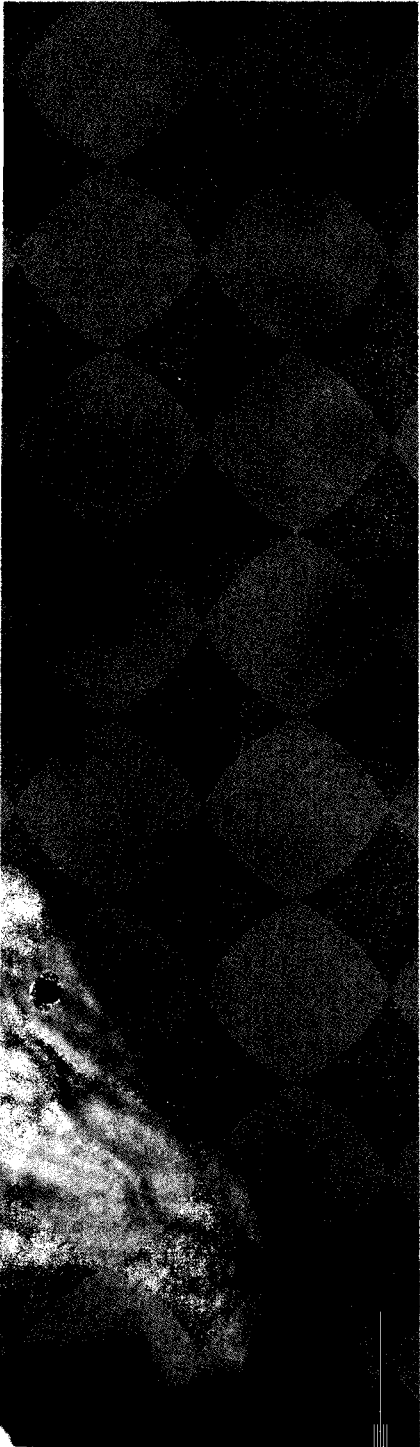
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The National Science Foundation team experimented in New Jersey with a system both layered and containing mandates. Systems like it could be employed nationwide to bring teledemocracy a step closer to real democracy. Our experiment was conducted with the help of the League of Women Voters, which was attempting to decide, as it does once a year, which issues to give priority. We organized the league's members into groups of ten, and they conducted their "town meetings" by means of conference calls. Each group chose its own priorities and selected a representative to take that agenda to the next level for discussion. We then held conference calls with groups of ten representatives, who decided among themselves which views and preferences to carry to the third and final level, at which statewide policy decisions were made. A survey established that the members were highly satisfied with the results. Every member was able to participate in the decision-making process, and yet the elected representatives were free, within an area indicated by those who elected them, to work out a league-wide consensus.

Such a model could be applied to a nationwide audience, drawing on the magical power of exponential curves: if representatives were layered in the suggested manner, millions of participants could very quickly be included. Indeed, suppose that various experts addressed the country on Sunday from 10:00 to 11:00 A.M. about whether the United States should cut back the military by 50 percent over five years. The conference buzz would start with groups of fourteen citizens, each having an hour to discuss and vote. Each group would elect one representative to participate in conference-call discussions with thirteen representatives of other groups. Each group of representatives would in turn elect an individual to speak for them, and so on in a rising pyramid. If this process occurred seven times, by six o'clock in the evening 105 million adults could be reached, which is more than the 91 million who voted in the 1988 presidential election.

The technical problems we encountered in our experiments were minor. We discovered that it takes some practice to get used to a conference by telephone. For example, you have to

find ways to let it be known that you wish to speak (raising your hand obviously will do little good). And it is not always easy to tell who is the chair, the person who facilitates the dialogue and must control those who hog time. We dealt with the first problem by making use of the fact that the receiver button can be briefly clicked without disconnecting the line. The resulting signal can be recorded on a panel attached to the chair's phone, showing that you are in the queue to speak. Costlier possibilities come to mind, but they might require that U.S. phone companies do what the government of France has already done: equip each citizen's phone with a small computer attachment. The second problem resolved itself, for during a short dry run most chairs quickly learned to assert themselves.

SESAME STREET teaches children about democratic elections in the following manner: You have three dollars to spend. Some people want crayons, others juice. You vote on what to buy. If the majority wants crayons, you get crayons. Such a simplistic explanation may do for young children, but adults who think of democracy as a voting machine miss an important feature of town meetings: such meetings expose people to conflicting arguments and make them think about their preferences before they vote.

The last thing a democracy needs is for people to vote their raw feelings, their first impulses, before they have had a chance to reflect on them and discuss them with others. Hence it is highly undesirable to expose people to a new idea, policy, or speech and ask them to vote on it immediately—which is precisely what most media polling currently does. A much more democratic model would result if at least a day's delay were required before the vote was taken, to enable people to discuss the matter with their families, neighbors, and co-workers.

We conducted such an experiment in three high-rise buildings in Queens, New York. These buildings, which contained about eleven hundred families, shared a cable system, and a studio in the basement of one of them enabled a person to address all the TV sets in the buildings. We provided the residents with questionnaires on which they marked their views on selected lo-

cal issues. We then broadcast a panel discussion on TV. Next we created an opportunity for dialogue: residents were invited to walk over to the studio and address the community about the issues on the table. This was followed by a second brief questionnaire. Unfortunately, owing to various technical difficulties, I cannot state unequivocally that the results were beneficial. The data suggest, however, that people moved from more extreme positions toward the middle, and that they moved either toward a consensus or, on one issue, toward two positions from a much wider, confused spread.

A minor but not trivial problem is that when citizens speak up in a live town meeting, they get immediate feedback on how their views are received. As a result, they continually adjust what they are saying, moderating their views (or expounding upon them) when faced with a negative reception and speaking more firmly (or more conciliatorily) if faced with a sea of heads nodding in approval. This feedback is largely lacking in conference calls and other communication by electronic means. So the NSF team provided levers that participants in a lab could move on a continuum from "agree" to "disagree," thus affecting a small amber light that would shine brightly when a majority pulled their levers toward "agree," and would dim if many pulled in the opposite direction. This device provided speakers with some instant feedback. To provide a similar feature on a nationwide or community-wide basis, we would probably, again, have to move toward phone-system technology similar to that in France.

ONCE WE PUT our minds to it, other shortcomings of the electronic town meeting could be fixed. Take, for example, ballot-box stuffing. Even when much less than national policy is at stake, call-in polls have been grossly manipulated. Richard Morin, the polling director for *The Washington Post*, reports two such incidents. In one, *USA Today* asked its readers in June of 1990 if Donald Trump symbolized what was right or wrong with the United States. Eighty-one percent of the 6,406 people who called in said that he was great, 19 percent a skunk. It turned out that 72 percent of the calls came from two phone numbers. In another 1990 poll 21 per-



cent of the callers on the issue of abortion voted at least twice.

This problem can be fixed. People could be required to punch in a Social Security number and two other identifying details, perhaps birth date and mother's maiden name. Computers could flag instances in which either the identifying information did not match the Social Security number or the same Social Security number was used more than once. And penalties like those now in place for election fraud could be extended to the electronic ballot box. The system would not be foolproof, but neither is the other system—as historians of the city of Chicago and biographers of Lyndon B. Johnson will tell you.

Those who complain that teledemocracy allows people to make only simple yes and no choices should note that the system can be as complicated as citizens wish. There are no technical obstacles to providing callers with three phone numbers instead of two (for “maybe” as well as “yes” and “no”), or with decision trees, in which, for example, they reach the “yes” line and are then offered a menu of choices, such as “only if the cost is less than \$10 billion,” or “less than \$20 billion,” and so on. Such a system would be at least as subtle as a vote that takes place on the electronic board of the House of Representatives or on a paper ballot loaded with local initiatives.

Several of the sharpest critics of teledemocracy focus on the fact that it is highly unrepresentative. James Fishkin, a political philosopher at the University of Texas, discussed this issue in the journal *The Responsive Community*, in an article about “America on the Line,” a CBS program that aired after the 1992 State of the Union address. The network invited viewers to call in their reactions; seven million people tried to call, and three hundred thousand got through. When their reactions were compared with those of a scientific sample of public opinion taken at the same time, Fishkin reports, significant differences were noted. For instance, whereas 53 percent of the callers believed that America was worse off than it had been a year earlier, only 32 percent of the representative sample felt that way. Others have pointed out that those who are most likely to participate in a teledemocratic exchange are those who are educated, are politi-

cally active, or feel passionately about an issue.

All this would be a problem if one expected electronic town meetings to replace public-opinion polls and the ballot box. It is much less problematic, however, if teledemocracy is *added* to other means of public expression, each of which has its own defects—defects that can to some extent be compensated for by combining the various means. Take public-opinion polls, which play a major role in selecting candidates for office and affect policy between elections. Although the sampling methods used are accurate, and result in a cross-section of the public that is superior to anything to be hoped for in telepolling, the results can be deeply skewed by the phrasing of the questions. Even small changes in wording often lead to major changes in the public's response. Moreover, polltakers allow no time for deliberation or dialogue, and provide no information to those they query about the issues the pollsters are raising. Finally, those who show up at traditional ballot boxes do not themselves constitute a scientifically accurate cross-section of the public. They are more educated, more politically active, more affluent, and often more passionate about the issues than those who do not vote.

A key point is that actual voting allows citizens to have a say only once every two years at most. Present-day government, which directly affects numerous issues, from abortion to unemployment, from school busing to security of savings, requires ways to read the public mind between elections.

Electronic town meetings might reduce but would not expunge the deep sense of citizen disaffection, because they would address only part of the problem. The American political system suffers not only from a lack of opportunities to participate but also from the strong influence that special-interest groups wield upon national and state legislatures. Congress often knows quite well what the public prefers, but special-interest groups are a major source of the vast funds that members of Congress need for their election campaigns. Until this unholy alliance is severed, teledemocracy's primary contribution might well be to make it even clearer to the public that legislators often do not respond to the public will.

—Amitai Etzioni

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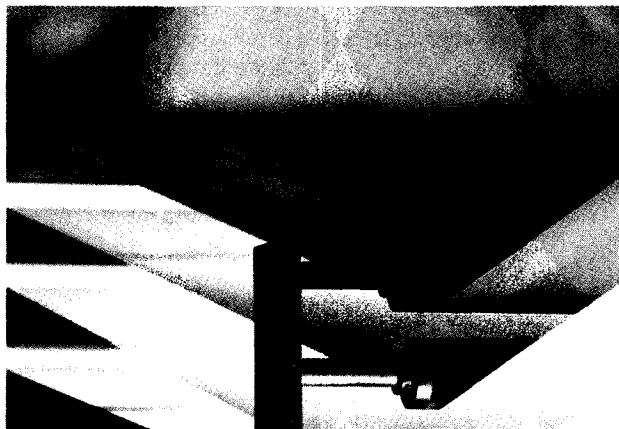
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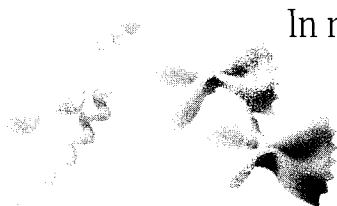


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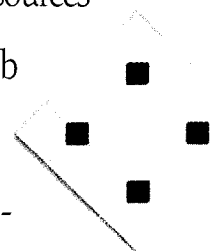
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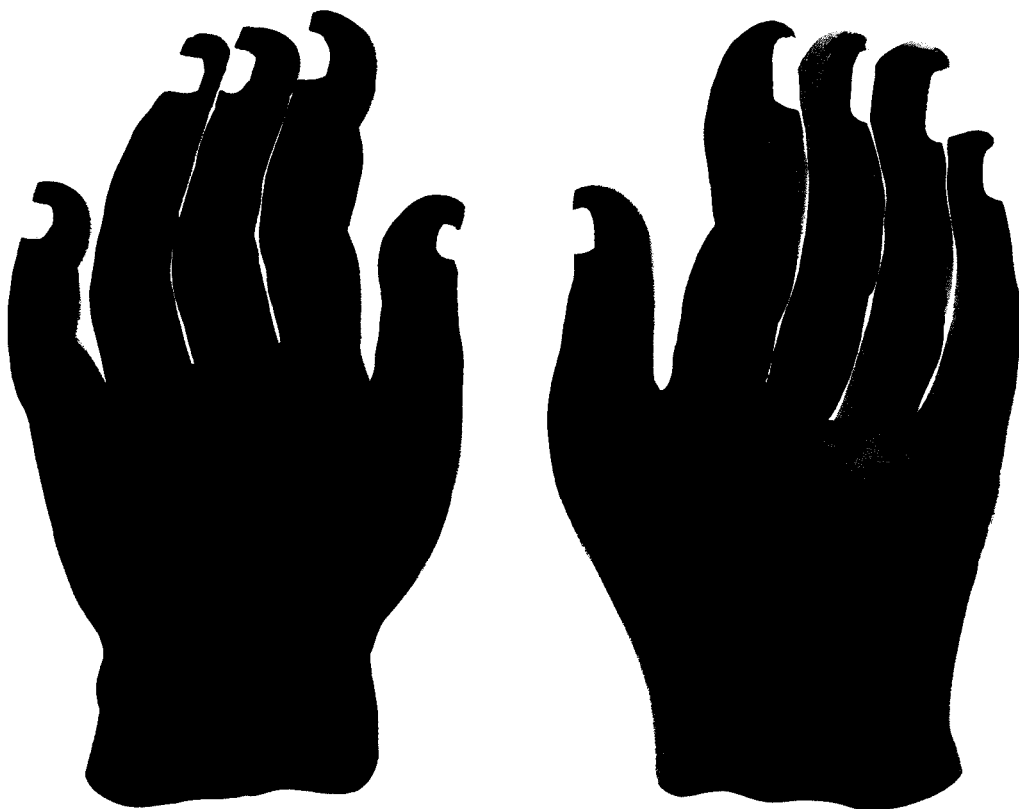
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The struggle for the bottom rung

BLACKS VS. BROWNS

BY JACK MILES



Behind the Los Angeles riot lay a grim economic competition between Latinos and African-Americans, which is intensifying and which poses a stern challenge to U.S. domestic and foreign policy, as well as to sentimental cultural attitudes about immigration

DURING THE 1980S, ACCORDING TO CENSUS figures released last May 11, the United States admitted 8.6 million immigrants. In the context of U.S. immigration history this is a staggering number—more than in any decade since 1900–1910. Worldwide, half the decade's emigrants had made the United States their destination. Of them, 11 percent—more than three quarters of a million—further specified their choice as Los Angeles. By the end of the decade 40 percent of all Angelenos were foreign-born; 49.9 percent spoke a language other than English at home; 35.3 percent spoke Spanish. This is the city where, two weeks before those figures were released, the most violent urban riot in American history broke out:

fifty-one people were killed, and property worth \$750 million or more was lost.

Though the occasion for the riot was the acquittal of four white policemen on charges of assaulting a black traffic offender, Latinos as well as African-Americans rioted. Why? What was Rodney King to Latinos? Did a race riot, once begun, degenerate—or progress—into a bread riot? Was it a vast crime spree, as devoid of political content as the looting that followed the 1977 blackout in New York City? Of those arrested afterward—of whom more than half were Latino—40 percent already had criminal records. Was the riot a defeat of the police? If it was a hybrid of all these, was it, finally, an aberration from which, by hard work, America's second-largest city could

recover? Or was it the annunciation of a new and permanent state of affairs?

I work at the *Los Angeles Times*, writing a column for that newspaper's book supplement and unsigned editorials three or four times a week for its editorial page. On the day after the first night of the riot, one of my colleagues said to me, as we left to hunt for a still-open restaurant, "When the barbarians sacked Rome in 410, the Romans thought it was the end of civilization. You smile—but what followed was the Dark Ages." Think of what follows here as the voice of a worried Roman—in front of a television set, watching the Goths at their sack.

Meeting Latino Los Angeles

I CAME TO LOS ANGELES IN 1978, TO WORK AS AN EDITOR in the branch office of the University of California Press at UCLA. The first home I owned here was a house trailer in Malibu. In 1981 a Santa Ana—one of the notorious local windstorms—ripped off the carport attached to the trailer and did some further damage to the roof. My wife and I had some insurance, but not enough. To help me complete my do-it-yourself repairs, I hired two Mexican boys from the pool of laborers who gathered daily near a shopping center just off the Pacific Coast Highway. One of the two, Ricky Rodríguez (not his real name), just fifteen years old when we met him, would become almost literally a member of our family.

One Sunday afternoon, after Ricky had been working with me part-time for several weeks, a Coast Highway landslide cut Malibu in half, and we invited Ricky to stay overnight. The buses weren't running. His alternatives, both illegal, were sleeping on the beach and sleeping in some neglected patch of brush along the road. He accepted the invitation and on the morrow brought my wife and me a breakfast in bed consisting of fried eggs and peanut butter sandwiches. In the sudden, unforeseen intimacy of the moment, a kind of conversation began different from any we had yet had. We began to learn something about his family.

Ricky, his mother, two sisters, and a brother were living in City Terrace Park, a neighborhood in East Los Angeles, as the permanent houseguests of another sister, her husband, and their two small children: nine people in a two-bedroom cottage. Ricky's brother-in-law, at the time the only American citizen in the family, was a cook whose generous employer had bought him this cottage. (Later, Juan José—called Juanjo for short—would open his own burrito shop.) Ricky invited me to visit his family, and I did so. I had never been in the barrio before.

Ricky continued working for us over several months. Relations remained friendly, and he eventually asked if we would adopt him, purely for legal reasons: to make him a citizen. His mother and I visited a sympathetic Chicano immigration lawyer, but Mexico's laws protecting its children made the move legally complicated. I did

agree, however, to tutor Ricky through his remaining two years of high school—and here we return to the riot as an event in a mecca for immigrants.

As a taxpayer, I was surprised—not that I wasn't happy for our young friend—to discover that his status as an illegal immigrant was no bar to his attending high school at state expense. He did have to show a birth certificate; but, interestingly, his mother, a short, stout, indomitably cheerful woman who had crossed the border as a single mother with four children, of whom the youngest was a toddler at the time, had brought birth certificates with her. She had had education on her mind from the start, and a Guadalajara certificate was certificate enough for Wilson High School, which received money from the state on a per capita basis and would have lost money had illegal immigrants been denied admission.

Another surprise came in Ricky's senior year, when he



asked if I would accompany him to the Department of Motor Vehicles and permit him to take a driving test in my car. (My presence and signature may have been required in some other capacity as well; I can no longer quite remember.) I knew by then that illegal immigrants commonly drove the streets and freeways of Los Angeles without any kind of driver's license. Ricky wanted a license mainly because it provided an identification card and a degree of cover for someone seeking work. He took and passed the test in the Lincoln Heights DMV office not far from downtown Los Angeles.

But here again I was surprised that no proof of legal residency was requested for the receipt of a California driver's license. On the Coast Highway, I had witnessed hair-raising "sweeps" by Immigration and Naturalization Service agents on the very corner where I had hired Ricky. Such chases farther south, at an INS checkpoint

on Interstate 5, north of San Diego, led with grim frequency to traffic deaths. Why did the INS not simply come to the DMV office in Lincoln Heights and arrest applicants? As we waited in line to deliver Ricky's completed written test, we overheard the clerk administering the same test orally—in Spanish—to a short older man with a coppery Amerindian face. He would have fallen one answer short of the passing grade had she not given him a broad hint.

The DMV office had as foreign a feel to it as the *correo* in Mexico City. One heard almost no English at all. Ricky took his test not long after Election Day that year. The contrast between the two populations—the one in the polling station, the other at the DMV—was overwhelming. The DMV office seemed to be a part of the American administration of some foreign—or indigenous but subject—population.



A Latino Riot?

BACK TO THE RIOT: WAS THERE A POLITICAL MOTIVE for the Latino rioting? There is a radical fringe of Chicano activists with a political agenda for the land they call Aztlán: northwest Mexico and the southwest United States. They claim, not without reason, that Chicano farm workers now sweat on land stolen from their ancestors. But Ricky and his family take a different view. I learned in passing that as an eighth-grader Ricky had donned a feather headdress and a loin-cloth and danced in a "folkloric" group organized by one of his teachers, but the Aztecs meant no more to him than the Illinois did to me as a Boy Scout in Chicago. Ricky's older brother, Victor, once asked me in puzzlement why Americans gave Spanish names to their houses and boats. Why not English names? A rich and interesting question, perhaps, but not one that betrayed a political agenda.

We learned later that in fact many if not most of the Latino rioters were either Central Americans or very recent Mexican immigrants, and that what the riot might have been to us Anglos, it was also, to some considerable extent, to the established Mexican-American political leadership. They, too, were wondering about a huge, strange, possibly angry, Spanish-speaking population in their midst. Who were these people, and what did they want? If they had no political agenda, if they were common criminals, well, that, too—given their growing numbers and the demonstrated inadequacy of the police—was news, wasn't it? The population of South Central Los Angeles had doubled since 1965. For every black in the area there was now at least one Latino. That had to make a difference. But what kind of difference?

In the weeks following the riot, Latino leaders from East Los Angeles were concerned that the sudden spotlight on South Central Los Angeles would rob them of scarce government funds. They were on guard against the possibility that South Central Los Angeles would be rewarded for its violence and East Los Angeles punished for its good behavior. "Just because we didn't erupt in East L.A., does that translate into us being ignored or missing out on the funds that are funneling into the communities?" asked Geraldine Zapata, the executive director of the Plaza Community Center. But the more immediate challenge to Mexican East Los Angeles was coming in terms with Central American South Central Los Angeles.

The Watts II Paradigm: Blacks vs. Whites

THE MAINSTREAM INTERPRETATION HAD LITTLE to say about either Mexicans or Central Americans. It took the riot to be Watts II, a repetition of the 1965 black riot, touched off by the verdict in the King case but growing out of the deeper frustrations of the black population over rising unemployment, institutionalized police brutality, and eroded public

assistance. That interpretation was surely right as far as it went. Those who mentally bracketed the riot between the videotaped beatings of King by a gang of white policemen and of Reginald Denny, a white trucker, by a gang of black rioters were not altogether wrong to do so.

And this interpretation was reinforced during the weeks following the riot by the competing rhetoric of black rappers on the one hand and the police on the other. On June 26, Police Chief Daryl F. Gates's last day on the job, Amnesty International released a report, "Police Brutality in Los Angeles," claiming that the department used its Taser guns and turned loose its dogs on suspects who were not resisting arrest or had already been taken into custody. LAPD brutality, the report claimed, "has even amounted to torture." Gates replied by denouncing the organization as "a bunch of knucklehead liberals" who "attack everything that is good in the country . . . and good in the world."

Earlier, Sergeant Stacey C. Koon, the commanding officer in the King beating, had discussed his unpublished memoir, "The Ides of March," with reporters, apparently in an attempt to sell it. The manuscript includes the following description of Koon's treatment of a Latino said to be under the influence of the drug PCP (the same was said, wrongly, of Rodney King):

My boot came from the area of lower California and connected with the suspect's scrotum about lower Missouri. My boot stopped about Ohio, but the suspect's testicles continued into upper Maine. The suspect was literally lifted off the ground. The suspect tried to speak, but it appeared he had something in his throat—probably his balls.

That beating, captured on videotape, became a popular training tool for young officers. "The tape was to become a legend in its own time," Koon wrote. A Latino may thus have been Koon's most abused victim. However, it was Koon's reference to King as "Mandingo" that attracted the most outraged comment. In general, the more post-riot analysis concentrated on violence and the police, the closer it stayed to the Watts II, black-white interpretation.

The same interpretation, though with one important qualification, was fostered by the popularity—among whites as well as blacks—of virulently racist, grotesquely violent black music, much of it originating in Los Angeles. On June 23 both the city council and the county board of supervisors called on Time Warner and local retailers to discontinue sales of Ice-T's album *Body Count*. Later Willie L. Williams, the newly sworn-in black police chief, did the same. "Cop Killer," then one of the cuts on that album, includes the chorus:

COP KILLER, it's better you than me.
COP KILLER, fuck police brutality!
COP KILLER, I know your family's grievin'
(FUCK 'EM!)
COP KILLER, but tonight we get even.

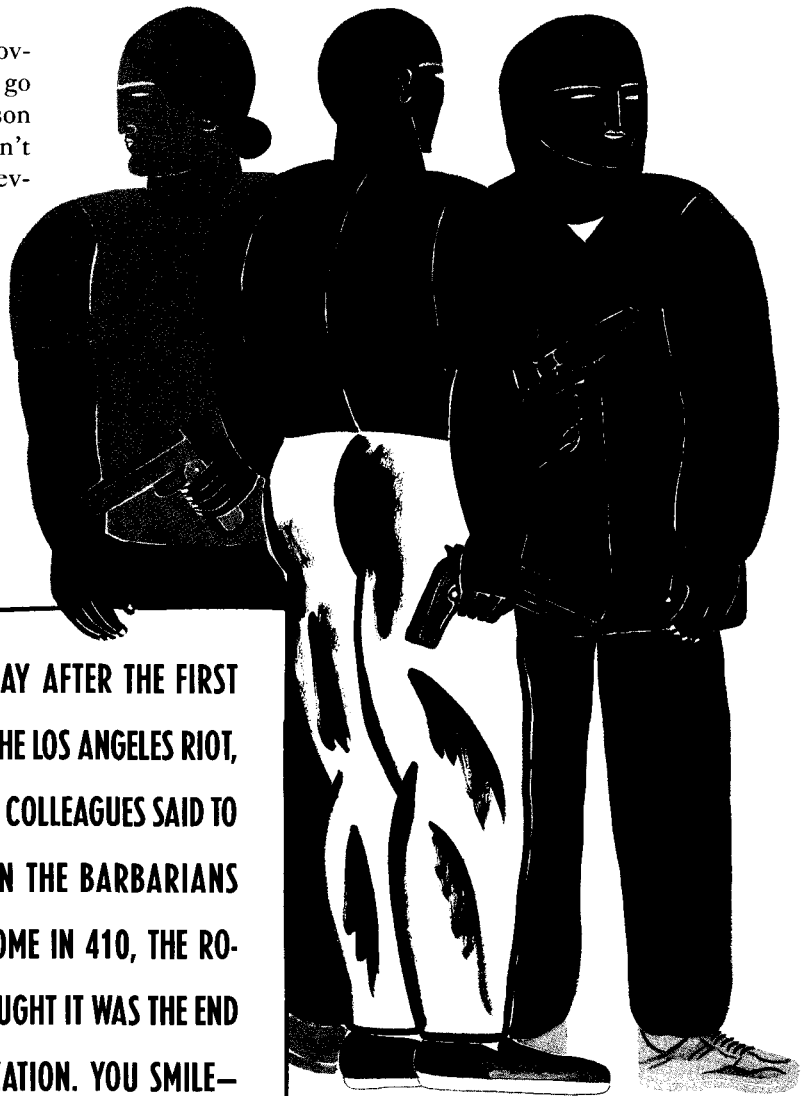
Ice-T defended himself rather in the manner of a novelist. He told a New York audience, "At no point do I go out and say, 'Let's do it.' I'm singing in the first person as a character who is fed up with police brutality. I ain't never killed no cop. I felt like it a lot of times. But I never did it." This justification was a little thin for the grieving widow and daughter ("Fuck 'em!") of a slain officer who had testified before the city council. Norma Williams's husband, Tom, was murdered by Daniel Jenkins, against whom he had testified in an armed-robbery case. Jenkins ambushed Williams as the policeman was picking up his six-year-old son at a day-care center, pumping eight bullets into the detective's body while the boy watched and later, according to the testimony of an accomplice, describing with pleasure how the victim's body convulsed with the impact of each bullet. "Cop Killer" has a spoken, prose prologue:

This next record is dedicated to some personal friends of mine, the LAPD. For every cop that has ever taken advantage of somebody, beat 'em down or hurt 'em, because they got long hair, listen to the wrong kind of music, the wrong color, whatever they thought was the reason to do it, for every one of those fuckin' police, I'd like to take a pig out here in this parkin' lot and shoot 'em in their motherfuckin' face.

Willie Williams's reaction to this was "I have major problems with it as an American, as a parent, and as a police officer. I have buried five police officers during my career. . . . I think it's a disgrace that any singer would use such vulgarity and give the implication that killing an officer is okay." Williams was joined by relatives of the slain officer as he called on Time Warner to withdraw the album: "I think that, minding the Constitution, it should be voluntarily withdrawn." Los Angeles's African-American Peace Officers' Association disagreed with the new chief, but on balance the "Cop Killer" controversy had kept the focus on blacks and the police and away from more complex, multi-ethnic readings of the riot.

As a riot paradigm, Watts II had two versions: the black and the white, or (almost, but not quite, the same) the liberal and the conservative. An independent commission, chaired by the former deputy secretary of state Warren Christopher, had investigated the LAPD after the Rodney King beating and recommended major changes. The most important of them—limiting the chief's tenure in office and making him and the police department

ON THE DAY AFTER THE FIRST NIGHT OF THE LOS ANGELES RIOT, ONE OF MY COLLEAGUES SAID TO ME, "WHEN THE BARBARIANS SACKED ROME IN 410, THE ROMANS THOUGHT IT WAS THE END OF CIVILIZATION. YOU SMILE—BUT WHAT FOLLOWED WAS THE DARK AGES."



more clearly subordinate to elected government than they had been under the civil-service model—were overwhelmingly approved by the voters in June. Liberals saw the future in that vote. Conservatives saw the future less in the

vote than in the 64 percent jump in handgun purchases which followed the riot.

Welcoming the Troops

THERE IS IN FACT MORE CONVERGENCE HERE than meets the eye. Proposition F, the police-reform measure, passed despite fierce opposition by the chief and much of the police department, but it didn't pass because the voters wanted less policing. The LAPD has been a quasi-military, cold, hard, swift, but—most important—small and low-cost police force. The police have been in effect the domestic Marines, flying in to put down insurrections. They have not been an occupying force, and yet an occupying force is precisely what the population wants and needs.

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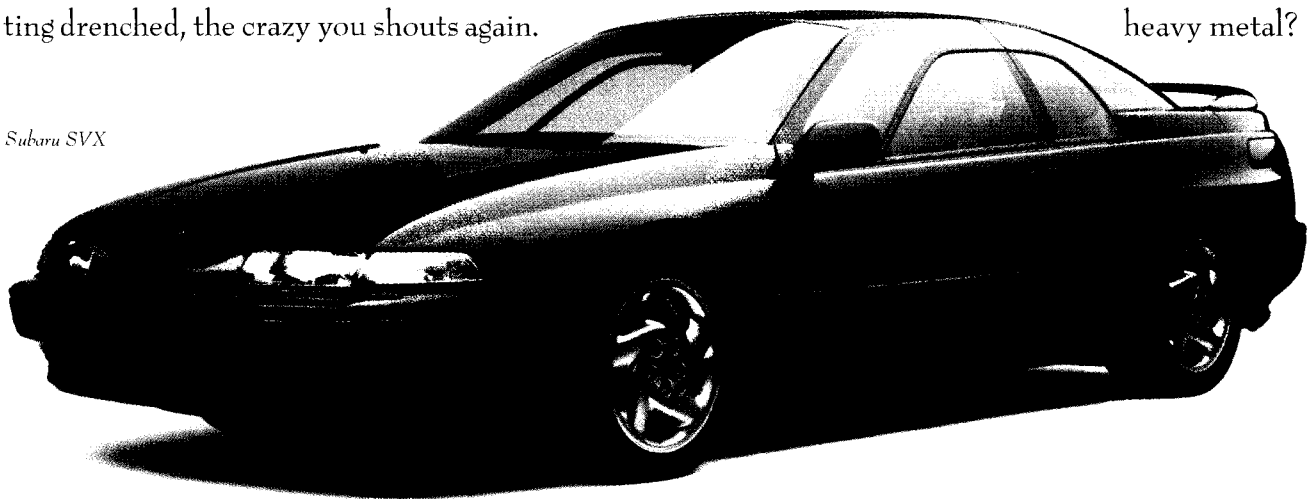
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"Community policing," the alternative whose revival (there's nothing new about it) was urged by the Christopher Commission, amounts to a steady, low-level involvement by a resident force with the law-abiding portion of the population in the interests of more effectively controlling the lawbreaking portion. During the riot the National Guard, which came and went in a matter of days, was far more like a community police force than the community's own police force. The news photographs—Guardsmen talking to children, strolling in pairs down the sidewalks, and so forth—were of scenes that would be noticeably out of character for the hard-assed LAPD. An English friend of mine who a few years ago approached an LAPD officer in downtown Los Angeles to ask for directions was told, "Buy a map." Whatever Los Angeles cops are, they are not helpful bobbies. "Smoked Pork," the opening cut on *Body Count*, begins with a playlet. A young black approaches a cop asking for help with a flat tire. The cop snarls, "No! That's not my job! My job is not to help your fuckin' ass out!" The black then "smokes" him.

The Guardsmen seemed young, small, out of shape, and amateurish by comparison with the LAPD, but the sentiment universally expressed when their withdrawal was announced was a wish that they would stay longer. Since the LAPD had failed to stop the outbreak of the riot, few had much confidence that it could stop a recurrence. More than that, there was a faint sense that the Guard had arrived not to reinforce the LAPD but as a peacekeeping force placed between the out-of-control citizenry and its out-of-control police force.

An Austrian-born editor of my acquaintance says that the way New Yorkers cope with street crime reminds him of the way ordinary Europeans navigated between the Nazis and the Resistance under Nazi occupation. The Resistance saw every citizen not known to be a partisan as potentially a collaborator, and therefore an enemy. The Nazis saw every ordinary citizen not known to be a collaborator as potentially a partisan, and therefore an enemy. In New York, my friend says, street criminals and the police, for different reasons, both look on ordinary citizens as potentially the enemy. Life for the ordinary citizen becomes, as a result, an endless round of precautions. One is never not on guard.

This comparison gives a paradoxical, probably unwelcome, confirmation to the black leaders who insisted on calling the Rodney King riot an "uprising." Though triggered by an action of the government, the riot had no real political content. The largely white Revolutionary Communist Party, the American affiliate of Peru's Shining Path guerrillas, did join in on the first night, but it was utterly peripheral to the main action. Those who used the word "uprising" were right in one regard, however. The riot was just a brief, high-intensity episode in a longer-running, low-intensity conflict for which some word with a longer time frame built into it had to be found.

The trouble, increasingly, was that the mass of citizens were on neither side: not, obviously, with the criminals, our urban terrorists, but not quite with the police either. This was the truth that lurked in the welcome given the troops. If an extended occupation could somehow rein in both sides, law-abiding Angelenos of all races would welcome it. (Think how insurance rates would go down!) And most would greatly prefer benign military occupation—or, if you will, a vastly increased community police force—to the wildcat do-it-yourself policing of private gun ownership.

The ratio of police officers to residents in Los Angeles is 2:1,000, the lowest in the nation. And the horizontal immensity of the city's geography further complicates its policing problems. Los Angeles deploys fifteen officers per square mile, as compared with eighty-nine per square mile in New York. Changing the city's numbers would cost money, and neither liberalism nor conservatism has had the will even to make the case for the change. Liberalism wants to spend tax money on other needs first. Conservatism doesn't want to spend money on anything, not even public safety.

One of the first tasks of an occupying force, if we had one, would be disarmament. I dream of a house-by-house search for illegal arms. But we have no such occupying force, and we aren't likely to get one. On the day of his swearing-in, Police Chief Williams found himself in a public disagreement with Mayor Tom Bradley over whether the city could afford to increase its police force. Days after that, because of a catastrophic revenue shortfall at the state level, the question shifted to whether there would have to be a cut.

The smaller and weaker the police force grows, the greater the domestic arms race among the citizens. Gun shops were among the businesses looted during the riot. Thousands of stolen firearms were added to the hundreds of thousands already in circulation. Legal gun sales, as noted, jumped dramatically after the riot. The National Rifle Association has been running large display ads in the newspapers offering free instruction to new gun owners.

Two weeks after the riot David Freed, an investigative reporter, published an extraordinary five-part series in the *Times* on guns in Los Angeles. Eighteen months earlier Freed had published a similar long and chilling series on law enforcement and justice in the city, titled "Justice in Distress: The Devaluation of Crime in Los Angeles." Its conclusions were that a criminal here stands a small chance of being apprehended, if apprehended a small chance of being convicted, if convicted a small chance of serving a full sentence. In brief, the city appears to be essentially unpoliced. In the new series he was drawing a matching portrait of the public reaction, criminal and otherwise, to that astounding state of affairs. This time, as before, the statistics he marshaled were simply staggering. The rate of death by gunshot homicide in Los Ange-

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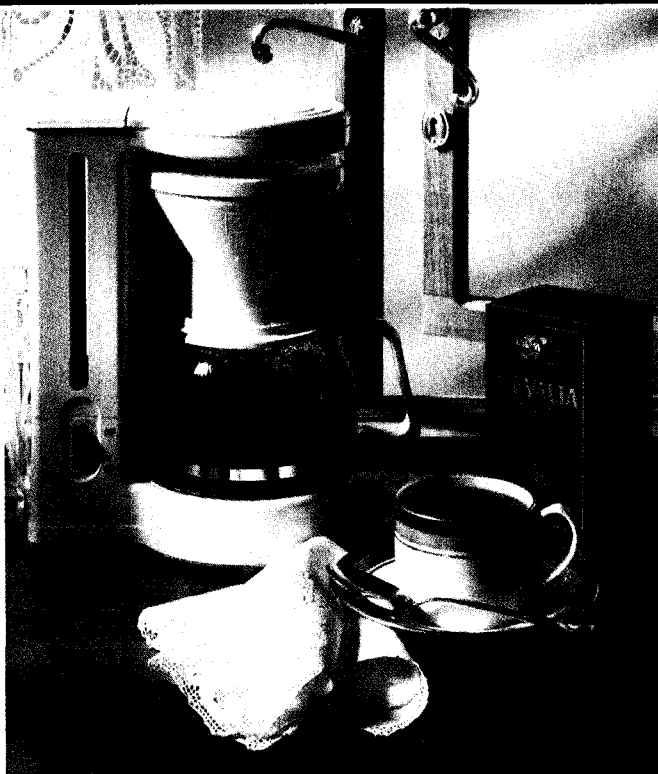
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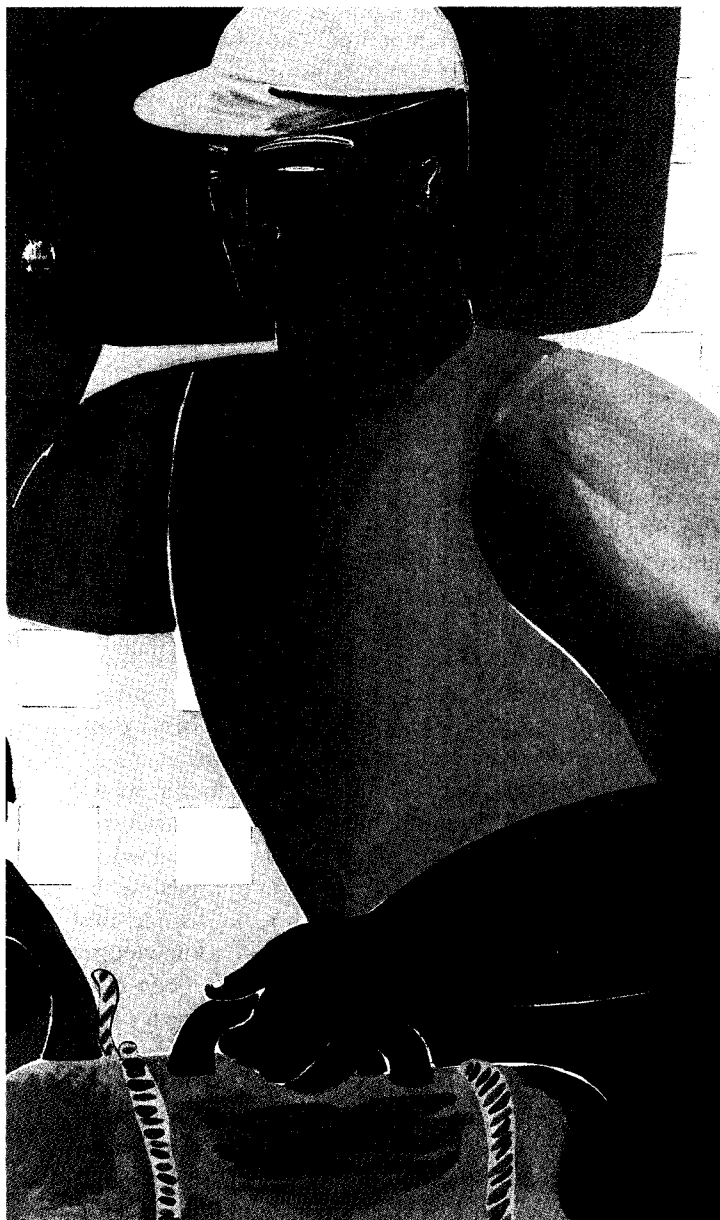
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les had been less than half the rate of vehicular death in 1970. In 1991 it exceeded that rate. Vehicular safety had improved somewhat, matching the national trend, but the gunshot-homicide rate had tripled: from 464 to 1,554 per 100,000. As for nonfatal shootings, they are so numerous that victims are interviewed briefly or not at all. Strikingly, the understaffed LAPD rarely attempts to trace a weapon. Over the past five years, Freed reported, "466,453 handguns were sold legally in Los Angeles County, one for every 19 residents. . . . In San Francisco, handgun sales totaled 20,606—a ratio of one for every 35 residents." To these handgun numbers must be added legal sales of rifles and shotguns and also illegal sales of guns of all kinds. And the number of guns sold in any way over a five-year period obviously does not equal the total number of guns in circulation.

The influence of guns on ordinary life in Los Angeles

is pervasive and profoundly linked to race. During the days following the riot, blacks complained that they were treated with a tense, elaborate politeness when their fellow citizens couldn't avoid them altogether, but avoidance was the preferred strategy. Los Angeles begins at a low level of mutual understanding. The interracial hyperpoliteness whose artificiality offends many blacks is only a heightened form of the city's notorious laid-back manner. The superficiality of Angeleno conversation, so striking to Europeans, is a defensiveness born of experience: blandness as a protective coloration. One's conversation partner, after all, may be a follower of anyone from Swami Prabhupada to Charles Manson. Why provoke him when for all you know he is not just odd but armed? The diffuse paranoia of a city where so little is shared in the way of common history or securely held values is especially vulnerable to exacerbation by a real-life menace that is



both acute and mobile. The automobile, every Angeleno's coat of mail, was no protection from the mob. As all the world knows, motorists were pulled from their vehicles and beaten or killed during the riot.

The entertainment leviathan feeds on this paranoia. Time Warner, the producer of *Body Count*, whose jacket art included a black fist holding a revolver pointed at the viewer, also produced *Lethal Weapon 3*. But conservative politics feeds on the same paranoia. By midsummer George Bush, Dan Quayle, some sixty mostly Republican congressmen, and the National Rifle Association had all joined the call for a Time Warner boycott. The Time Warner shareholders managed to face down two blinded police officers who addressed their meeting. Though one could feel sorry for them, freedom of artistic expression was a noble tradition, and then, too, profits were up. But when a pension fund decided to divest itself of Time

Warner stock, internal dissent grew, and Ice-T, late in July, announced that he had asked his producer to reissue *Body Count* without the offending cut. The result was a last spurt in popularity for what is now a collector's item. Meanwhile, Daryl Gates's memoir, *Chief: My Life in the LAPD*, rode high on the *Los Angeles Times* best-seller list for weeks.

A New Paradigm: Blacks vs. Latinos

FOR ALL THE COMPELLING POWER OF THE WATTS II paradigm, however, for all the relevance of white violence and black rage, something still more powerful was happening, and the Latino population of southern California was at the heart of it.

About a month after the riot a friend sent me a copy of an unsigned editorial from a Mexican-American newspaper, *La Prensa San Diego*, dated May 15. What other Latinos had begun to insinuate, *La Prensa* angrily spelled out: Blacks were not victims. Latinos were victims. Blacks were perpetrators.

Though confronted with catastrophic destruction of the Latino businesses, which were 60% of the businesses destroyed, major looting by Blacks and by the Central Americans living in the immediate area and a substantial number of Hispanics being killed, shot and/or injured, every major television station was riveted to the concept that the unfolding events could only be understood if viewed in the context of the Black and White experiences. They missed the crucial point: The riots were not carried out against Blacks or Whites, they were carried out against the Latino and Asian communities by the Blacks!

What occurred was a major racial confrontation by the Black community, which now sees its numbers and influence waning.

Faced with nearly a million and a half Latinos taking over the inner city, Blacks revolted, rioted and looted. Whatever measure of power and influence they had pried loose from the White power structure, they now see as being in danger of being transferred to the Latino community. Not only are they losing influence, public offices, and control of the major civil rights mechanisms, they now see themselves being replaced in the pecking order by the Asian community, in this case the Koreans.

The editorial ended by declaring "the established Mexican American communities" to be "the bridge between Black, White, Asian and Latinos." It said, "They will have to bring an end to class, color, and ethnic warfare. To succeed, they will have to do what the Blacks failed to do; incorporate all into the human race and exclude no one."

There was, to put it mildly, little in that editorial to suggest that desperately poor, fifteenth-generation African-Americans might be within their rights to resent sudden, strong, officially tolerated competition from first-generation Latin Americans and Asian-Americans. But *La Prensa's* anger clearly arose not just from the riot, perhaps

not mainly from the riot, but from frustration at television's inability to see Latin Americans as a part of the main action at all.

I don't think that any clear pattern of blacks attacking Latino businesses or Latinos attacking black businesses can be established. Koreans do plainly seem to have been singled out for attack—by some Latinos as well as by many blacks. But state officials believe that at least 30 percent of the approximately four thousand businesses destroyed were Latino-owned. Both "*Somos Hermanos*" and "Black Owned Business" were frail armor even when those labels were honestly applied. As the police re-established control, thousands of arrests were made; more than half of the arrestees were Latinos, but the older, second-generation, law-abiding Mexican-American community resented the lack of differentiation in the label "Latino." This community insisted with some feeling that in the communities it regarded as truly and more or less exclusively its own there had been no rioting. By implication this was the beginning of an anti-immigrant stance within the community.

What counts for more, however, than any incipient struggle between older and newer Latino immigrants is the emerging struggle between Latinos and blacks. *La Prensa* is right to stress the raw size of the Latino population. The terms of engagement, if we take our cue from the rappers, would seem to be black versus white or black versus Asian. But the Korean population of Los Angeles County is just 150,000, a tiny fraction of the Latino population of 3.3 million. Of the 60,560 people in Koreatown itself, only 26.5 percent are Asian; more than 50 percent are Latino. Blacks are the most oppressed minority, but it matters enormously that whites are no longer a majority. And within the urban geography of Los Angeles, African-Americans seem to me to be competing more directly with Latin Americans than with any other group.

I find paradoxical confirmation for this view in the fact that some of the most responsible leaders in both groups want to head it off. A month after the riot my wife and I received the June newsletter of the Southern California Interfaith Taskforce on Central America, a group to which we have contributed a little money over the past several years. SCITCA, originally a lobby for the victims of state-sponsored violence in (principally) El Salvador and Guatemala, has more recently expanded its agenda to include the fate of Central Americans now settled in Los Angeles. It has effectively lobbied, for example, for a relaxation of the municipal regulation of street vendors.

In the wake of the riot SCITCA was worried about anti-immigrant backlash. Joe Hicks, of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Frank Acosta, of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, wrote in the newsletter,

In the aftermath of the recent civil unrest. . . Immigrants and refugees in particular have been targeted for

blame, violence and civil rights abuses. . . Fears of overcrowding, the burden on local communities, competition for scarce jobs, drainage on public resources through the education and social welfare systems are all commonly held apprehensions about the impact of immigrants in our communities. Similar fears were voiced during the migration of African-Americans from the south to the northern cities earlier this century. In the past few years, however, a growing number of social scientists, economists and researchers have concluded that the social and economic impact of immigration is overwhelmingly positive. By and large, it is the prospect of freedom and economic opportunity, not welfare, that draws immigrants to the state.

Hicks and Acosta were astute to recognize that the movement of millions of blacks from the rural South to the urban North was a migration as enormous as any from abroad, but the fate of those black immigrants and the cities that received them rather subverts the lesson the two writers want to draw. And alongside the recent, pro-immigration literature that the two cite is a small but growing body of even more recent literature suggesting that whether we will it or not, America's older black poor and newer brown poor are on a collision course.

A married couple, both white, both psychiatric social workers in the Los Angeles Unified School District, recently told us of several monolingual school social workers who had been let go to make room for bilingual workers. With so many Spanish-speakers in the district, the rationale for requiring social workers to have a knowledge of Spanish is clear. Our friends have, in fact, been diligently studying the language to protect their own positions. And yet it struck them as tragically shortsighted that most of the dismissed social workers were black.

A member of our church administers a subsidized day-care center in northwest Pasadena, once a black neighborhood, now, like South Central Los Angeles, an extremely overcrowded black and Latino neighborhood. Black welfare mothers, our friend reports, are increasingly turned away from the center, because on the neediest-first principle they no longer qualify. Latino mothers, often with more children than the blacks and with no income even from welfare, are needier, and claim a growing share of the available places. Are the Latino mothers illegal? Are they just ill-equipped to apply for welfare? The kindly day-care people don't ask.

Hicks and Acosta exhort: "The poor communities of Los Angeles cannot get caught up fighting over the peanuts that have been given to them by the economic, political and educational institutions of America." But even if these communities make common political cause, do they have any choice about economic competition? The General Accounting Office reports that janitorial firms serving downtown Los Angeles have almost entirely replaced their unionized black work force with non-unionized immigrants.



SOME ARGUMENTS FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY ARE SMALLER THAN OTHERS.

Around the nuclear electric plant on Florida's Hutchinson Island, endangered wildlife have a safe haven. The baby sea turtles hatching on nearby beaches are more evidence of the truth about nuclear energy: it peacefully coexists with the environment.

America's 110 operating nuclear plants don't pollute the air, because they don't burn anything to generate electricity. Nor do they eat up valuable natural resources such as oil and natural gas.

Still, more plants are needed—to help

satisfy the nation's growing need for electricity without sacrificing the quality of our environment. For a free booklet on nuclear energy, write to the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness, P.O. Box 66080, Dept. TR29, Washington, D.C. 20035.

NUCLEAR ENERGY MEANS CLEANER AIR.

If you live here, you don't need the General Accounting Office to bring you the news. The almost total absence of black gardeners, busboys, chambermaids, nannies, janitors, and construction workers in a city with a notoriously large pool of unemployed, unskilled black people leaps to the eye. According to the U.S. Census, 8.6 percent of South Central Los Angeles residents sixteen years old and older were unemployed in 1990, but an additional 41.8 percent were listed as "not in the labor force." If the Latinos were not around to do that work, nonblack employers would be forced to hire blacks—but they'd rather not. They trust Latinos. They fear or disdain blacks. The result is unofficial but widespread preferential hiring of Latinos—the largest affirmative-action program in the nation, and one paid for, in effect, by blacks.

Pierre Venant, a French photographer of international reputation, made the acquaintance of Father Greg Boyle, a Jesuit who until recently worked in a part of the barrio so badly wracked by gang violence that funerals are held almost weekly. Out of a desire to help Father Boyle, Venant began teaching photography in the barrio and photographing gang members and their sometimes exceedingly elab-

orate, mural-sized, almost liturgical graffiti. I asked him once whether he had ever considered teaching in the black ghetto. He answered no, that there was something so nihilistic, so utterly alienated, in the black youths he had met that he doubted he could make a connection with them. He was apologetic but plain: it was just easier with the Mexicans. "Maybe it is the Catholicism," he said, "or something in the Latin personality."

The Comfort Factor

I AM AFRAID THAT QUIET CHOICES LIKE VENANT'S have by now been made so many thousands of times in Los Angeles that, at least to Anglos, Latinos, even when they are foreign, seem native and safe, while blacks, who are native, seem foreign and dangerous. In saying this, I am saying something that I shrink from say-

ing and grieve to say, but I think it's true. As a graduate student at Harvard, I shared an apartment with a Nigerian, and I learned to measure by the ease and speed of my rapport with him, despite immense cultural differences (he had been raised in a polygamous family), how deep an estrangement separated me from African-Americans. For a time I helped to administer Harvard's Big Brothers program, which teamed freshmen, almost always white, with fatherless boys, almost always black, from the Columbia Point Housing Project. I spent a lot of time during that period with black people, and this in the 1960s, when interracial hope and good will were at flood tide. But in the end I felt that even

with me they were prepared at every moment, at every single moment, for the worst—braced, as it were, for a blow. This is what slavery has done to us as a people, and I can scarcely think of it without tears.

Every other week since the riot a team made up of parishioners from my church, St. Edmund's, in San Marino, and from St. Martin's, in Compton, has distributed food to needy people in Compton. One of the albums of the rap group N.W.A. (the name stands for "Niggers With Attitude") is titled "Straight Outta Compton." Compton, a town in the South Central area of greater Los Angeles, has replaced Watts, a Los Angeles neighborhood, as a byword for black anger, and not just because of that album. But the people we see meekly filing past for their shopping bags of free food are more often old than young and, to my eyes, more weary than angry. Black writers since at least Richard Wright's day have noted with bitterness

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how white America smiles on cute black children and the benign black elderly, while the prime-of-life adults of the black community and, above all, its young males are objects of white dread. Times have changed, at least some: Arsenio Hall, Eddie Murphy—if not niggers with attitude, then undeniably African-Americans with panache—would have been inconceivable in Wright's day. And yet I still caught myself being surprised—and then chagrined at my surprise—to see how frail some of our “customers” were. I was particularly struck by an old, bent black man wearing a bright green DAY LABORERS' UNION windbreaker. He wasn't up for much in the way of day labor, but when he had been young and strong, had he been a union man? What had happened to his union? And to his hopes? These are the black people nobody but other black people ever really sees and nobody but other black people ever stops to think about.

And yet . . .

My wife and I sold the trailer in 1986 and bought a small house in an unincorporated chunk of Los Angeles County, adjacent to Pasadena on the east. Of twenty households on our block, one is Asian (Chinese), two African-American, and one Latino (he is Puerto Rican, she is Mexican). None of the houses on the block is large enough to accommodate live-in help, but several of us do employ gardeners. All the gardeners are Latino, and when a slight brown man walks down a driveway, he is understood to be there for good reason. Were a tall black man to do the same, there is not one of us who would not immediately be on the *qui vive*. My sadness about the American estrangement just mentioned doesn't make me act any differently at such a moment.

Black men complain that they cannot shop without being shadowed by a suspicious shopkeeper. The same in effect goes for the black teenagers who show up unannounced on our block. These are kids who skip out of the junior high school in the next block, picnic on our lawns, steal from our garages and back yards, and occasionally vandalize parked cars. The retirees living on the block watch the kids especially closely. One retiree once managed to videotape an attempted garage break-in. The school's officials—not always sympathetic (until recently the principal was a black woman)—identified the culprits from the tape.

We, who live peacefully with the black families on our block, are afraid of these black kids. I contrast our attitude toward them with the attitude taken in neighboring Sierra Madre, almost completely white and Republican, toward a group of as many as twenty Latino men who gather each morning except Sunday in a park near the fire department. They are day laborers, the poorest of the poor, awaiting work. In principle (and especially toward the demoralizing end of a day when no one has hired them), they ought to be desperate, but they are in the main clean, quiet, mannerly, polite to the residents, and agreeably fraternal with one another. This very conserva-

tive, old-fashioned community tolerates their presence calmly.

Whether or not Latinos are completely trustworthy (I have already mentioned the bloody barrio gang wars), I think that they do enjoy the trust of Anglos and Asians in Los Angeles. In the yard, in the house, with the baby, in the hotel room or the hotel corridor, in the parking garage, in a hundred locations, work, however menial, creates a vulnerability and thereby a brief intimacy between server and served. In all these places the average white or Asian Angeleno prefers to have—and usually does have—a Latino rather than an African-American doing the work. Whence at least some of the disorientation and diffuse anxiety at the television footage of rioting Latinos: Had that young man dashing out of the liquor store been in your back yard earlier in the week? Was that woman trundling a shopping cart of looted groceries out of the supermarket your neighbor's live-out? (“Live-out” is Angeleno for a domestic servant who works for you five or six days a week, all day, but doesn't sleep over.)

I do not discount, as I mention this “comfort factor,” that inexperienced Latino noncitizens may be much easier to exploit than experienced black citizens. Ricky was hired at less than the minimum wage to do dry-wall plastering on Santa Monica condominiums that sold for more than \$1 million each. The contractor trained him on the job. Ricky learns quickly, and his by then confident bilingualism was a major plus for his employer. He was promised a “real” job after this unofficial apprenticeship ended, but no such job ever materialized. His brother Victor, who owns a car, worked briefly for a messenger service. He was required to use his own car. No mileage, insurance, or fuel costs were paid by his employer. He was paid by the mile only when actually delivering a package, but was required to keep himself available for an assignment even when none was forthcoming. The Latinos I know think that Asians are particularly likely to cheat and brutalize their Latino employees in ways like these.

And I do not mean, either, to sanctify Latinos at the expense of blacks. Victor called me as I was writing this article to report that Miguel, “Mike,” the youngest brother in the family, was about to get out of jail. Ricky is also in jail as I write, and one of his earlier criminal ventures began with my wife. Near the end of Ricky's senior year his mother told me that he was dejected because he couldn't afford to attend the prom: no car and no money to rent a tux. I said I would rent the tux for him. My wife, who had just bought a used Honda and hadn't yet sold her 1969 Volkswagen, agreed to lend him the VW for the occasion. He had a good time at the prom but didn't return the car for two days. Graduation came a few weeks later. (The commencement speaker was State Senator Art Torres, whose remarks were all about Latino progress, but when the awards were given out, the few Asians in the student body won them all.) By custom, on

Isn't it time to stop and start cleaning up

SUPERFUND ISN'T WORKING.

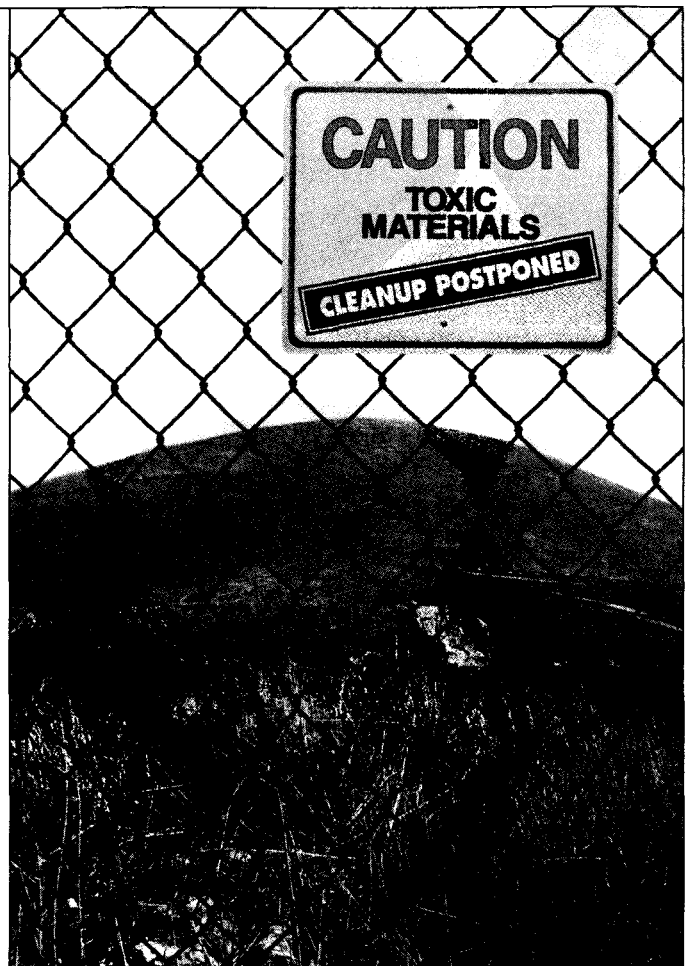
For more than a decade, the Federal Superfund program, designed to clean up America's waste sites, has been a gold mine for lawyers and consultants.

Billions have been spent on Superfund since 1980, but cleanup has been completed at fewer than 5 percent of the nation's 1,200 most dangerous waste sites.

Where has the money gone? An enormous amount has been spent arguing and litigating over who should pay for cleanup. When Congress created Superfund, it envisioned fast, efficient cleanups that would be funded by finding those responsible at each and every site and making them pay. While this sounds good in theory, in reality this approach has buried Congress's vision under an avalanche of litigation and expensive, lengthy negotiations.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

First, many sites were created by waste disposal that took place 20, 30 or 40 years ago, or even longer. This can make identifying everyone connected with a site—finding records to prove who has owned and operated it, who sent what waste, how much and where—expensive and time-consuming.



Second, Superfund holds anyone who has ever owned, used or transported waste to a site liable for the entire cost of cleanup, even if no laws were broken at the time and even if they contributed only a tiny fraction of the waste. This forces those identified at Superfund sites—whether they be large corporations, small businesses, local governments, hospitals,

Are we wasting millions at America's waste sites?

universities or even individuals—to spend more time and money looking for others to share the costs.

With cleanup costs averaging \$26 million per site and some sites costing in the hundreds of millions, it's little wonder that organizations and private parties spend years in negotiations and litigation. In fact, at some sites, more money is spent on determining who will pay than on cleanup itself. This does a lot for lawyers and consultants but very little for the environment.

Even the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) commented, "One of the sad truths about the program is that so much money has gone to people in three-piece suits and not moon suits."

IT'S TIME FOR SOMETHING BETTER: THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST FUND.

Superfund's goal of cleaning up the environment has been badly undercut by this fund-raising system. The result has been unacceptable delays in cleanup and enormous legal and other transaction costs paid for by government, the private sector and insurers. Isn't it time to stop this waste of resources and get on with cleaning up the environment?

At AIG, we think so. America needs a system to promote fast and efficient cleanup, reduce unnecessary legal fees, spread the cost of cleanup broadly, and encourage responsible waste management practices today.

To accomplish this, we have proposed creating the National Environmental Trust Fund (NETF). The NETF would be a special fund, like the National Highway Trust Fund, dedicated only to cleaning up old Superfund sites. It would be paid for by a broad range of businesses and organizations without regard to liability.

YOU CAN HELP.

We've waited long enough and spent far too much money in the courtrooms. We're urging the President and Congress to act now by creating the NETF to improve Superfund.

If you'd like more information about the National Environmental Trust Fund and what you can do about Superfund, please write Mr. M.R. Greenberg, Chairman, American International Group, Inc., 70 Pine Street, New York, NY 10270.

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and financial services.

the day after graduation local high school seniors head for Magic Mountain, an amusement park. Ricky asked to borrow the car again. We were already planning to sell it to him and let him pay us in installments from his first job. He was prematurely developing a proprietary attitude toward it. My wife had a premonition. I overrode it. He stole the car and skipped town.

The odd consequence of this episode was an intensification of my relationship with Ricky's family, especially his mother. The police, once they knew the car had been "borrowed for keeps," wouldn't list it as stolen. But if I couldn't call it stolen, I couldn't get it off my insurance policy. I had to gamble that if Ricky's ties to us were breakable, his ties to his family were not. It worked. Ricky eventually returned the car, and afterward even paid us \$250 for it—less than it was worth but, given his resources, a meaningful gesture.

By that time we had a new baby in the house, and we lost touch with the Rodríguez family—until a few years later, when Victor called to invite us to his wedding. Ricky, who had been working as a house painter near Sacramento, was back in Los Angeles, nattily dressed and doing well, it seemed, as a salesman in a car dealership. Victor spoke of him with a kind of relief. But some months after the wedding Ricky and Victor's sister Elena called to ask, on behalf of their mother, if I would stand bail. Ricky had been stopped on a traffic charge, and a computer check showed that he was wanted for parole violation in the north. I declined, but later, on a trip to Sacramento, I visited him in the minimum-security jail where he was serving his sentence. I learned then that during his first northern period he had become a father. The child, a boy, was being raised by its mother and her parents, Anglos with whom Ricky claimed to be on friendly terms, though clearly all contact had been lost. After his release from jail Ricky moved in with Victor, Victor's wife, and their new baby, but within weeks he had been arrested again, this time on a drug charge. When Victor called about Mike, he said that Ricky, too, would be out in a month or two.

Sometimes, as I have reflected on our checkered ten-year friendship with the Rodríguez family, I have wondered whether Latinos do not have a better local reputation, and blacks a worse one, than each deserves. But how much difference does reputation ultimately make? True, walking the streets of downtown Los Angeles, I do not expect to be panhandled or shaken down (the two grow increasingly similar) by Latinos; I do fear that from blacks. True, I am wary of black men and generally nonchalant with Latinos. I think my attitudes are typical. And yet, all that aside, if there were no Latinos—and no other immigrants—around to do all the work that is to be done in Los Angeles, would blacks not be hired to do it? I think they would be. Wages might have to be raised. Friction might be acute for a while. But in the end the work would go looking for available workers.

Labor's View: The Rodney King Riot as a Bread Riot

I AM NOT ALONE IN THINKING SO. IN JULY OF LAST year the Black Leadership Forum, a coalition headed by Coretta Scott King and Walter E. Fauntroy and including Jack Otero, the president of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, wrote to Senator Orrin Hatch urging him not to repeal the sanctions imposed on employers of illegal aliens under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. "We are concerned, Senator Hatch," the group wrote,

that your proposed remedy to the employer sanctions-based discrimination, namely, the elimination of employer sanctions, will cause another problem—the revival of the pre-1986 discrimination against black and brown U.S. and documented workers, in favor of cheap labor—the undocumented workers. This would undoubtedly exacerbate an already severe economic crisis in communities where there are large numbers of new immigrants.

Labor leaders like Otero and another co-signer, William Lucy, of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, are notoriously critical of free trade, especially to the negotiation of a free-trade agreement between the United States and Mexico. Their opposition to lax enforcement of immigration law, which creates a free trade in labor, is only consistent. What difference is there between exporting jobs and importing workers?

The politics of labor and immigration makes strange bedfellows. On most issues the Southern California Interfaith Taskforce on Central America is an extremely liberal group, but on employer sanctions it sides with Senator Hatch. In effect, SCITCA would rather see wages go down and its Central American clients have work of some kind than see wages stay high and penniless refugees be left with nothing. La Placita, the Mission Church of Our Lady Queen of Angels, near downtown Los Angeles, became for a time a sanctuary for illegal hiring.

Latino immigrants at the bottom of the labor market often claim to be doing work that "Americans" refuse to do. Are they thinking of black Americans? It may not matter. Commenting to a *New York Times* reporter on the extremely low employment rate for sixteen- to nineteen-year-olds in New York City in early 1992—12.6 percent—Vernon M. Briggs, a labor economist at Cornell University, said, "To an immigrant willing to work two or three jobs at once, \$5 an hour may not look bad. But to a kid from Brooklyn or the Bronx, it is a turnoff." To some of their parents these kids seem to be prima donnas, but in fact the influx of immigrants willing to work long hours for low wages has depressed wages and increased competition beyond anything that the parents ever faced. And the attitudinal difference between unskilled Americans of any race and their immigrant competition shrinks as the immigrants gain a clearer view of what faces them in the United States.

During his buoyant junior year at Wilson High School, Ricky carried a pocket dictionary. One day he told me that he had come upon an entry that had shaken him to his roots: *happy-go-lucky*. "That's my problem," he said. "I'm happy-go-lucky." Ricky's merry, open-faced manner was one of his greatest assets, but I think I know what he meant. I had often marveled that a boy up against so much could remain so high-spirited. I now think that he simply hadn't yet realized how much he was up against. Tension grew between him and Victor after his first release from jail. Victor wanted Ricky to take a job, any job, just to be working: dishwasher, gardener's helper, anything. Ricky drew the line at that kind of work. He was able to do rough carpentry, dry-wall work, simple plumbing. Besides his building skills, he was completely bilingual and could even write surprisingly coherent and error-free English. "I am an educated man," he said to me in a choked voice. Both words counted. Ricky was arrested again on a drug charge, but he has never been addicted. He was dealing, and he was dealing because as he had grown more American, he had grown impatient. "Ricky wanted money. That's what got him into trouble," Victor says. Jorge G. Castañeda put it differently in an op-ed piece in the *Times*:

In Mexico and El Salvador, with the exception of the role played by the church in the latter country a few years ago, poverty and inequality did not outrage its victims, nor did it lead them to violence. . . . But the same deprivation, with the same inequities, in a radically different context, produces different effects. Poverty and injustice were not supposed to be the same: The United States was the land of social mobility, well-paid work and unlimited opportunities. Not any more. A Latin-American migrant's future is often the same as his current reality: \$4.50 an hour for unskilled labor for the rest of his or her life, maybe with a raise to \$6 or \$7 an hour, eventually.

But the young Mexicans or Salvadorans who do housework in Beverly Hills, garden in Bel-Air or park Jags and BMWs for restaurants on Melrose had no idea this is what awaited them when they left Usulután or Guanajuato. And the ideological bombardment they are now subjected to no longer helps them accept matters as they are. On the contrary, it incites rejection, indignation and class hatred. Any spark can light the fire.

So, yes, Latinos compete with blacks for work at the bottom, but they also match them in rejecting \$4.50 an hour as chump change. And then what? Then, among other things, readiness for a bread riot (a cake riot, if you

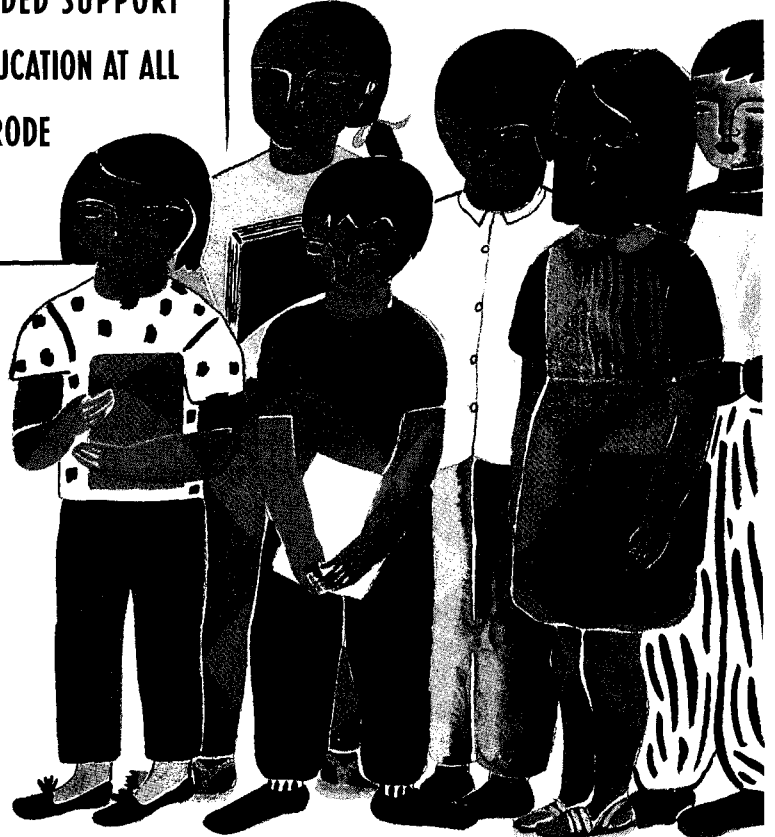
will) in which the disappointed, by the thousands, steal what they once thought they could earn.

The question of how immigrant groups may fit into the American economy without dislodging or otherwise adversely affecting native groups is itself contained in the larger question of how an American economy carrying all these groups within it can compete against other national economies. In an article given wide distribution by the Federation for American Immigration Reform, Vernon Briggs claims that immigration accounts for 30 to 35 percent of the annual growth of the American labor force, a proportion virtually unknown elsewhere in the industrialized world. In 1989, Briggs writes, "the total number of immigrants from all sources admitted for permanent residence was 1,090,924—the highest figure for any single year since 1914 (and this figure did not include any estimate of the additional illegal immigrant flow or of the

number of nonimmigrants permitted to work in the United States on a temporary basis during that year)."

The immigration story becomes the riot story by becoming a part of the labor story. And by an irony that I find particularly cruel, unskilled Latino immigration may be doing to American blacks at the end of the twentieth century what the European immigration that brought my own ancestors here

FEW CALIFORNIANS ARE AWARE, I THINK, OF HOW MANY PUBLIC-SCHOOL SEATS ARE FILLED BY ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS. BUT AS AWARENESS GROWS, THE ALREADY ERODED SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS MAY ERODE FURTHER.



did to them at the end of the nineteenth. Briggs writes,

When the industrialization process began in earnest during the later decades of the 19th century, the newly introduced technology of mechanization required mainly unskilled workers to fill manufacturing jobs in the nation's expanding urban labor markets. The same can be said of the other employment growth sectors of mining, construction and transportation. Pools of citizen workers existed who could have been incorporated to meet those needs—most notably the recently freed blacks of the former slave economies of the rural South. But mass immigration from Asia and Europe became the chosen alternative.

The chosen alternative: Those are the words that should disturb our sleep. People do not blow into our country like the weather. We let them in, and we have reasons for doing so. Or we should. In my city, on my own block, in my own house, I have seen the immigrant Latino alternative being chosen over the native black one.

But this is only the beginning of the problem. I am talking about a mistake that is now, as it were, complete. Blacks in Los Angeles having been largely closed out of the unskilled-labor market, the earlier-arriving Latinos are now competing with the later-arriving Latinos. This is the embarrassing fact that *La Prensa* seemed so little able to face and that has led lately to a Latino Unity Forum. Briggs makes disturbing reading on the consequences of increasing the pool of unskilled applicants while the pool of jobs shrinks:

No technologically advanced industrial nation that has 27 million illiterate and another 20–40 million marginally literate adults need fear a shortage of unskilled workers in its foreseeable future. Indeed, immigration—especially that of illegal immigrants, recent amnesty recipients and refugees—is a major contributor to the growth of adult illiteracy in the United States. To this degree, immigration, by adding to the surplus of illiterate adult job seekers, is serving to diminish the limited opportunities for poorly prepared citizens to find jobs or to improve their employability by on-the-job training. It is not surprising, therefore, that the underground economy is thriving in many urban centers. Moreover the nature of the overall immigration and refugee flow is also contributing to the need for localities to expand funding for remedial education and training and language programs in many urban communities. Too often these funding choices cause scarce public funds to be diverted from being used to upgrade the human resource capabilities of the citizen labor force.

Briggs's analysis seems to me to make a mockery of the brave talk of a Los Angeles "recovery." What does it mean for the city to recover in an American society that is adding at least 700,000 immigrants a year to its population? The official "Rebuild L.A." coalition, headed by Peter Ueberroth, the former director of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics and the former commissioner of baseball, will be hard enough pressed to cope just with the city's

share of those new workers. Assimilating so many new workers while re-assimilating the thousands left jobless by the riot may well be more than the economy could handle even in a boom period, and southern California is still deep in recession. The recession may mean that fewer Americans will move to the state, but if San Diego County statistics for 1990–1991 are any indication, foreign immigration may not be similarly slowed. In that period net domestic in-migration was just 427, a steep plunge in comparison with the increases of earlier years, but foreign immigration held steady at 19,442.

And competition for goods other than employment is more acute during a recession than at any other time. The Center for Immigration Studies estimates that direct public-assistance and education costs at all levels of government for immigrants and refugees entering the United States in calendar year 1990 totaled \$2.2 billion. Immigrants and refugees made up 1.3 percent of the caseload of Medi-Cal, California's state-paid health care, in 1980; the California Department of Finance estimates that they will make up 13 percent by the turn of the century. The administrative office of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors reported in the spring of last year that federal costs for the citizen children of ineligible alien parents, including Medicaid and Aid to Families with Dependent Children, had risen from approximately \$57.7 million in 1988–1989 to \$140.5 million in 1990–1991 and could reach \$533 million by the year 2000. If the burden of that welfare grows too great, another tax revolt could take place, and another safety valve could be removed from places like South Central Los Angeles.

Few Californians are aware, I think, of how many public-school seats are filled by illegal immigrants. But as awareness grows, the already eroded support for public education at all levels may erode further. Nonimmigrant whites are still the majority in the state, and older whites—whose children may be grown—still turn out to vote more reliably than any other group. True, only some of the Asians burning up the track at the University of California are immigrants, but more are the children of immigrants. When whites in Berkeley's freshman class dropped to 30 percent, there was talk of a cooling of white support for the costly nine-campus system. As for the larger, more teaching-oriented California State University, it has never charged noncitizens legally resident in California a higher tuition; but a recent decision by Alameda County Superior Court Judge Ken Kawaichi now requires that illegal aliens receive the same generous treatment.

By July 1, when a budget impasse for fiscal 1992–1993 forced California to begin paying many of its bills with scrip instead of money, some of the bitterest infighting had touched the third and nationally least known of the state's higher-education systems, the gigantic California Community Colleges system, with its 1.5 million enrollment. Would the heaviest community-college cuts come in short-term vocational education, hurting blacks disproportion-



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ately? Or would continuing education take the hit, hurting older white women returning to the work force? Little noticed in public comment on the budget battle was the fact that immigrants constituted 10 percent of 1990–1991 community-college enrollment. California was providing all-but-free higher education, in other words, to 150,000 immigrant undergraduates. For comparison, Harvard and Radcliffe together enroll fewer than 7,000 undergraduates. The community-college system has to be regarded as a de facto incentive for immigration—a GI bill for people who were never GIs, as I once heard it described. If and when free higher education for immigrants, especially illegal immigrants, comes under attack, however, free elementary and high school education for them will almost inevitably come into question as well. And the social dislocation lurking in the latter question is almost incalculable.

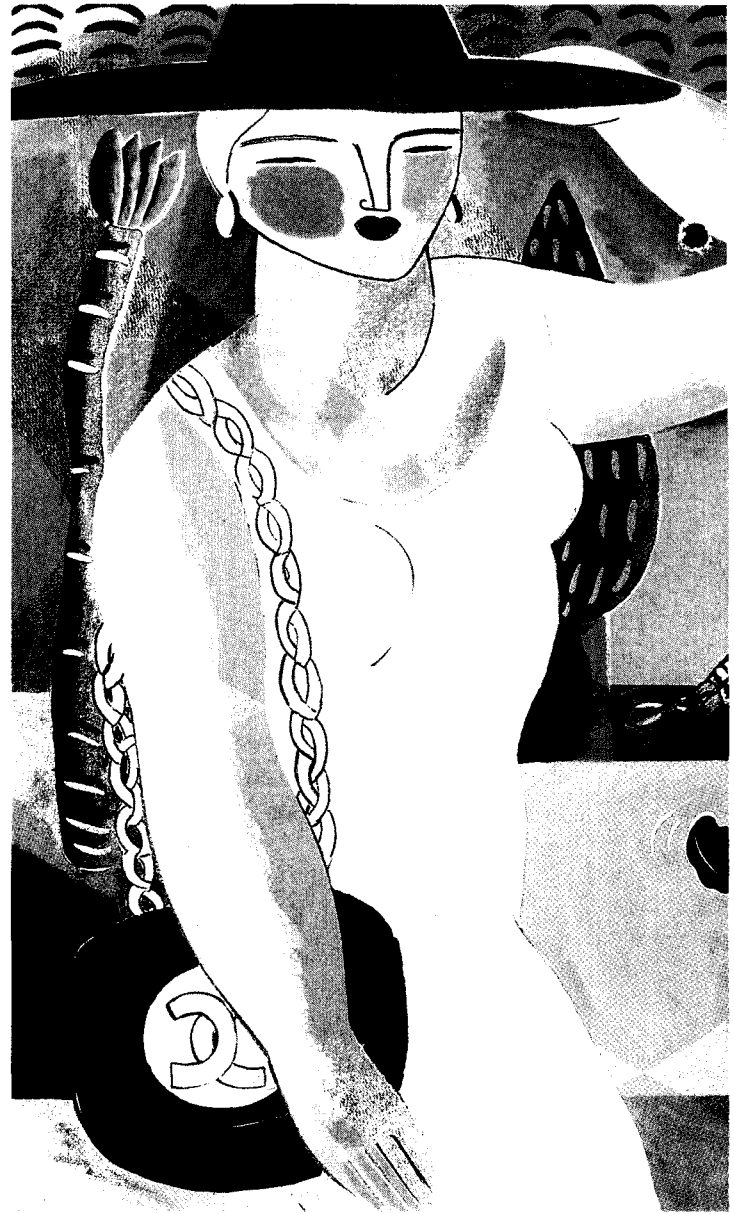
In March of last year *Science* published a research report by Georges Vernez and David Ronfeldt on Mexican immigration. The evidence in the report shows that recent immigrants are those who feel the greatest economic impact from still more recent immigrants. And because Mexican immigrants tend to be young and to have large families, they consume more in public services, especially educational ones, than they pay for. The researchers say that both the absolute size of the Mexican-immigrant population and its relative concentration in Los Angeles and several other western cities are growing.

Vernez and Ronfeldt also argue that “heavy immigration into California . . . let many low-wage industries continue expanding while their counterparts nationwide were contracting in the face of foreign competition.” Their data show that in California “manufacturing grew five times the national average whereas wages grew 12 percent more slowly in the state, and 15 percent more slowly in Los Angeles.” The implications for labor are clear: either manufacturing is exported to take advantage of cheap foreign labor, or cheap foreign labor is imported in numbers large enough to depress wages here. Open borders create a free trade in labor, and America’s southern border, though not open by law, has been open enough in practice to move the Los Angeles labor market sharply away from the American mean.

Do we like it this way?

The short answer might be yes if we want more riots, no if we don’t.

In his book *Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World*, David Rieff charges that white Los Angeles has grown addicted to the ministrations of a Latino “servitor class,” and there is something to his charge. In 1985 my wife and I paid \$65 a week to a licensed, well-educated, decidedly middle-class Peruvian couple who cared beautifully for several infants and toddlers in a home they owned. Our newborn daughter was typically with them from 7:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. five days a week. My younger sister, who lives in Skokie, a suburb of Chicago, found this at the time an incredible bargain, and so it has seemed to New Yorkers



and Washingtonians as well. Thus I no doubt fit Rieff’s definition of white Angeleno indulgence myself.

The larger beneficiaries of cheap labor, however, seem to me to be the larger employers. Ricky’s sisters Dolores and Graciela worked in a sweatshop assembling those little gadgets—two plastic eyelets joined by a length of cord—that tennis players use to keep their eyeglasses on. There were huge spools of the cord and barrels of the eyelets in the private home (of an Italian married to a Costa Rican) where they worked. And the profits from that little operation were surely peanuts compared with those made on the luxury condos where Ricky did his dry-wall work.

Obviously, Los Angeles should want to maintain a manufacturing base, large and small. But if the price is systematically depressed wages, and if the price of that depression is further riots, then the price is too high.



Will Immigration Be Reformed?

JUST DAYS BEFORE THE RIOT, THE ROPER ORGANIZATION conducted a major poll of American attitudes toward immigration for the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). On every single question for which the California response was broken out, the level of concern in California was higher—often strikingly higher—than the American average. Thus 76 percent of Californians answering the question “How do you feel about the number of immigrants who come to your state each year?” answered “Too high,” as against 42 percent of all respondents giving the same answer. Answering the question “In your opinion, has immigration become a financial burden on your state, or has the state been able to handle the immigration with no financial problems?” 78 percent of Californians, as against 43 per-

cent of all respondents, chose “financial burden.” Eighty percent of Californians think that steps should be taken now to limit the population of the state (a question that Roper put only to Californians).

FAIR has an agenda, of course, and polls by people with an agenda are always suspect. However, the Roper Organization is reputable, and the questions are more or less those that anyone interested in the subject would ask, phrased in acceptably neutral language. Thus, “Currently, immigration levels are not limited in any way to our country’s unemployment rate. Do you think immigration levels *should* or *should not* be related to our level of unemployment?” Fifty-eight percent of respondents chose “Should be related.” (Roper did not indicate whether any respondents corrected “limited” to “linked.”)

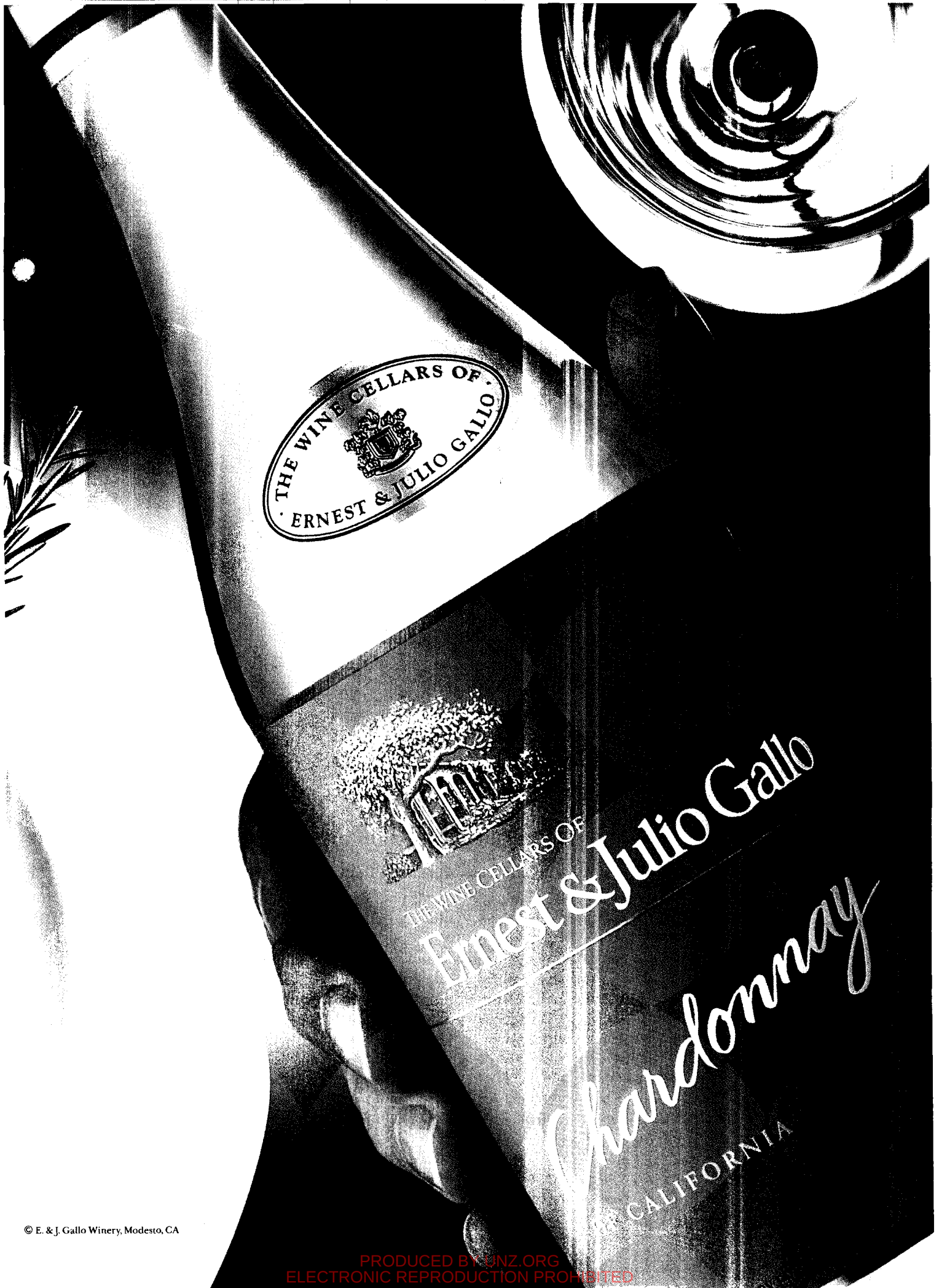
FAIR is anathema to some, but better a clearly framed agenda, however debatable, than free-range nativism.

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Some days after the riot I caught a fragment of televised debate between a handsome blond man of unsmiling, quasi-military demeanor, a proponent of a return to the pro-European quotas of the Immigration Act of 1924, and a Mexican-American activist of the Aztlán persuasion. Responding to the claim that the Southwest "was once ours," the young Aryan said, "Yes, and we took it from you in the manly, honorable way, by force of arms." A writer in the July, 1992, issue of the Rockford Institute's *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture* laments the intrusion of immigrants who "have no more intention of shucking the Third World they've lugged across the border than they have of going back after they make their millions. Once here, they're here for good, disrupting our institutions, like public schools, with foreign languages, pagan religions, and oddly spiced foods."

FAIR holds no brief for manliness, Christianity, or bland food. Nor, for that matter, does it oppose immigration. What it does call for is

a three year moratorium, or however long it takes to:

- 1) substantially eliminate illegal immigration;
- 2) implement and improve a national documents protocol to verify work eligibility;
- 3) revise immigration laws to substantially reduce overall numbers (to around 300,000 annually); and
- 4) complete a comprehensive analysis of the long-term demographic, environmental resource, urban resource, cultural and employment/economic effects of future immigration and population growth.

Ultimately, this question must be answered: What should the purpose of immigration be, now and in the future?

I link FAIR's question with the phrase of Vernon Briggs's that so struck me: "the chosen alternative." There are choices to be made. If we do not make them as a nation, through a national debate, then others inside or

outside the nation will make them for us. My strong suspicion is that if FAIR succeeds in launching this debate, it will begin on the right (immigration was the cover story in the June 22 issue of *National Review*) but quickly be seized by the left. The labels "left" and "right," however, are particularly misleading here.

If the right opposes immigration, it is likely to do so for the reasons hinted at in the quotation from *Chronicles* and on display as well in the *National Review* article, by Peter Brimelow: namely, because it wishes the United States to remain a culturally European and even English nation. The free-market right wing, however—the right that has favored a free-trade agreement with Mexico—ought to favor open borders as the logical extension of the

open shop. This is indeed the declared position of *The Wall Street Journal*. Such a position may be more ideologically consistent than politically feasible, but it is not without its supporters. Too many business interests have been served by cheap immigrant labor for any Buchananesque, shoot-to-kill sealing of our southern border to gain much Republican support. In short, between cultural conservatism and economic conservatism there is a certain tension on this question; but, as noted above, the situation is equally messy for liberals. If you marched with Amnesty International in Los Angeles on June 27, denouncing the border excesses of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, then do you positively—pro-actively, as they say—favor immigration? FAIR would admit 300,000 immigrants a year. How many would you admit? And if blacks get hurt, whose side are you on?

The traditional alliances grow particularly shaky in a cli-

BY AN IRONY THAT I FIND PARTICULARLY CRUEL, LATINO IMMIGRATION MAY BE DOING TO AMERICAN BLACKS AT THE END OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WHAT EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION DID TO THEM AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH.

mate of budget crisis like the current one in California. As I write, if California public education receives what Governor Pete Wilson budgeted for it last January, and if current revenue projections remain unchanged, then all other government services will have to shrink drastically. Mayor Bradley has warned of a total shutdown of the Los Angeles Public Library. Few believe that will happen, but if all ordinary deals are off, then some unlikely deals may be on.

FAIR has proposed, for example, a \$2.00 border-crossing fee to finance strengthened border security. According to the Roper poll, 72 percent of Californians favor that measure, and I am not surprised. Against them stand those who favor lax border security and some who go further and call for a borderless, European Community-like arrangement. The fee proposal could at least bring the issue to a head. Senator John Seymour has proposed a bill by which the federal government would be fiscally responsible for some or all of the legal costs incurred by illegal aliens, including public defense and incarceration. I'm not so sure that liberals wouldn't back that idea if they thought it would free up some California money for the beleaguered university. Representative Elton Gallegly, a Republican from Simi Valley, has proposed that American citizenship be denied to the U.S.-born children of illegal immigrants. I doubt that many Americans, liberal or conservative, have stopped to consider that not every country establishes citizenship as we do—that is, by place of birth rather than by descent. Perhaps the biggest bombshell would be the imposition of a citizenship requirement for elementary and high school education. I am not aware that anyone has proposed this. But the Los Angeles Unified School District, faced with a \$400 million cutback in its state funding for the coming fiscal year, notified its teachers in late July that their pay would be cut by 14 percent, and despite the severity of the economies, the district could conceivably go into receivership—as the Richmond District, near San Francisco, did last year. When such a thing happens, Sacramento is stuck both with a cash bailout and with the task of direct administration—all but impossible in the case of a system with 600,000 students. In such an unthinkable crisis unthinkable remedies might suddenly be thought of.

On June 23 Tim W. Ferguson published a column on immigration in *The Wall Street Journal*, under the title "The Sleeper Issue of the 1990s Awakens." He is right to summarize the issue thus, and in this sense, at least, I would agree with those who have called the Rodney King riot "a wake-up call." But what may quite possibly happen if the country hears this call is the revival of another sleeper issue—namely, labor. If you want to keep up with labor news in Los Angeles, the way to do it is to read *La Opinión*, the city's major Spanish-language newspaper. The GAO report I mentioned earlier says that during the 1980s the downtown force of hotel workers went from being almost 100 percent black, and organized, to 100 percent immigrant, and nonunion. That report has been overtaken

by events during the past five years. The unions are finding that the same Americanization, the same "Where's mine?" impatience, that turned Latinos into rioters can also turn them into strikers. A remarkable shot across the civic bow came when Local 11 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union produced and distributed to convention planners an "attack video" linking a grim portrayal of the dangers of life in Los Angeles to declining wages and deteriorating living conditions for the poor. As Frank Clifford, a *Times* writer, put it: "The message of the video is that the city won't be a nice place for tourists until the tourism business is nicer to its workers." A much improved contract followed with rare speed.

The End of the American Dilemma

WHETHER OR NOT THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE becomes a labor debate, America may not have the luxury of treating it as a merely national issue. Race relations were once the quintessentially domestic American problem—"an American dilemma," as Gunnar Myrdal called it. Immigration, too, a fact everywhere, was a boast here. What other nation had a major monument inscribed "Give me your tired, your poor. . . ." But these points of view have now changed. Because the world has shrunk, emigrants don't have to cut all ties to home and cast their cultural and economic lot with us as they once did. If it is possible for an American businessman to have a vacation home in France, it may be possible for a Korean businessman to have a "work home" or a "school home" in America. And if resolving the American dilemma—in other words, instituting a "blacks first" policy—creates a problem for such immigrants, the result may be an international incident, if not a long-running diplomatic problem.

South Korea's government sent a delegation to Los Angeles to request reparations for the burned-out merchants of Koreatown. The presidential candidate Kim Dae Jung came too, and though he spoke of compensation rather than reparation, his visit, like that of the government delegation, served notice that South Korea needs these merchants and still regards them as its own. Mexico made no comparable gesture, but it is worth noting that of Mexicans who entered the United States during the 1960s, only 21 percent had become citizens by 1980. This kind of statistic is usually cited to explain why Latinos have so little clout in American politics. But the same statistic, given an increase in cross-border tension, could explain why some future Carlos Salinas de Gortari or Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas could become a factor in U.S. domestic affairs as the powerful extraterritorial leader of millions of noncitizen residents of the United States. Any attempt in the interests of American blacks to seal the U.S.-Mexican border and seal in all of Mexico's unemployed would deprive Mexico of a desperately needed safety valve and could foster the rise in that country of a terrorist movement like

Peru's Shining Path. In short, America is no longer quite free to address the needs of its own underclass in isolation from similar needs elsewhere in the world.

Last spring saw both the riot in Los Angeles and the debacle (for the United States) of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development—the Earth Summit—in Rio de Janeiro. U.S. coverage focused on the environmental half of “Environment and Development.” The delegates, however, were at least equally interested in the developmental half, and therefore in the enormous disparity of wealth between the First World and the Third World. It was the reluctance of a Republican Administration to submit to a sociopolitical agenda dictated from afar that caused all the difficulty. President Bush sent William K. Reilly, of the Environmental Protection Agency. By rights, he could have sent both Reilly and Jack Kemp, of Housing and Urban Development.

FAIR has an ally of sorts in the United Nations Development Program, where much of the developmental half of the Rio agenda was hatched. Aldo Ajello, the assistant administrator of the program, who visited Los Angeles a month after the riot, is, in his own highly nuanced way, an opponent of immigration. The immigration of selected, well-prepared people can be good both for them and for the country that receives them, he says, but mass immigration of unskilled, unprepared people simply adds the problems of culture shock and maladjustment to the problems the immigrants are fleeing. From the standpoint of a developed country, opening markets to products from a neighboring underdeveloped country that otherwise might be reduced to exporting desperate, surplus people makes good economic sense. So does investing in such a country—for the same reason. Given a choice between exporting jobs and importing people, Ajello urges exporting jobs as the less disruptive alternative.

Because that alternative is not being chosen, he says, and because the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade actually governs (and frees) only a small fraction of world trade, enormous pressure is building for mass migration—the largest, he thinks, that the world has seen since antiquity. When I pointed out to him that the U.S.-Mexican border is the only land border between a First and a Third World country, he countered that Italy has a long, undefended coastline, that crossing from Morocco to Spain (or from Tunisia to Sicily) by boat may be easier than crossing from Haiti to Florida by boat, and that the land border between Western Europe and the former Soviet bloc is in some ways comparable to the U.S.-Mexican border. In the long run, he believes, global development will require open borders as well as truly free trade. As for the short run, “your choice is Marshall Plan or martial law.” Absent the most severe countermeasures, the increasing disparity of wealth will tend to move people across borders as irresistibly as a low-pressure-high-pressure system moves clouds. The top 20 percent of the world population had thirty times the wealth of the bot-

tom 20 percent in 1960. Today it has 150 times the wealth of the bottom 20 percent. Equalization can come about in only two ways: by immigration or by development; by moving people from the Third World to the First, or by moving capital from the First World to the Third. An American moratorium on immigration might be a defensible temporary expedient, but only if it was accompanied by a compensating increase in investment.

American discussions of immigration tend to focus on pull rather than on push—that is, on those aspects of American life which pull immigrants in rather than on those aspects of life in their native countries which push them out. FAIR might put in place quite an assortment of American disincentives—changes in the pull—without addressing the Third World distress that creates the push. At that point, having declined the Marshall Plan alternative, we might be forced into the martial-law one, and into a particularly severe form of it along our southern border. President Bush was less than eager to visit Los Angeles, and he was particularly loath to dignify the Rio conference with a personal appearance. In the end he could avoid neither, and he was, in effect, visiting two ends of the same globally disruptive process.

The Judgments of the Lord

THE SAME COLLEAGUE WHO REMEMBERED THE sack of Rome as we left the *Times* building, its windows still boarded up, the streets not yet patrolled by the National Guard, had earlier lent me his videotaped copy of the PBS Civil War series. Midway through the writing of this article I concluded my viewing of the series and heard an actor reading Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address. There is a strange, deep similarity between the logic of angry blacks who called the Rodney King riot understandable and inevitable—and, indeed, barely stopped short of calling it justifiable—and the logic of the man who wrote,

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

My deepest, least argued or arguable hunch is that everything in America begins with that old and still unpaid debt. An America in which it was finally paid, in which blacks were no longer afraid and no one was any longer afraid of blacks—what could such a country not attempt? But if, to quote an ex-slave, all God's dangers ain't the white man, all God's dangers ain't the black man either. The earth, as the century ends, has many wretched, and we are living in their house. □

IN THE DARK HOUSE



Anyone who has been tortured remains tortured. . . .

Anyone who has suffered torture never again will be able to be at ease in the world. . . .

—Jean Améry, Auschwitz survivor

People had celebrated him as a god
because his art, they said, was magical,
sweeter to them than the soft spring rains
that blew off the lilac mountains,
secret as the wind whispering through the olives.
Eurydice, his lissome bride!
He made a caressing music
out of the vowels of her name.
All that he ever wanted was to sing of his love.

Where had they gone, that ragtag minstrel band,
those merry dancers, with whom he strolled
at the green earth's invitation,
their ranks swelling at each crossroad?
How young they were
who crowned him king of their carnival!
And the news raced ahead that at his passing
trees broke into blossom out of season,
nightingales and owls perched on his shoulders,
and down the winding country roads
processions of wild beasts,
great spotted cats, weasels, and wolves
tagged meekly at his heels, tamed by his song.

*If he could reinvent those melting chords
struck from his nights of loneliness and need
that won reprieve in Pluto's rancid halls,
would he rejoice again to see
the dark lord shed a cold, permissive tear?*

He dared not look behind, nor could he guess
how distantly she trailed: that was the Law,
senseless and cruel, but still
the Law, imposing separate silences
on two who struggled up the fetid slope,

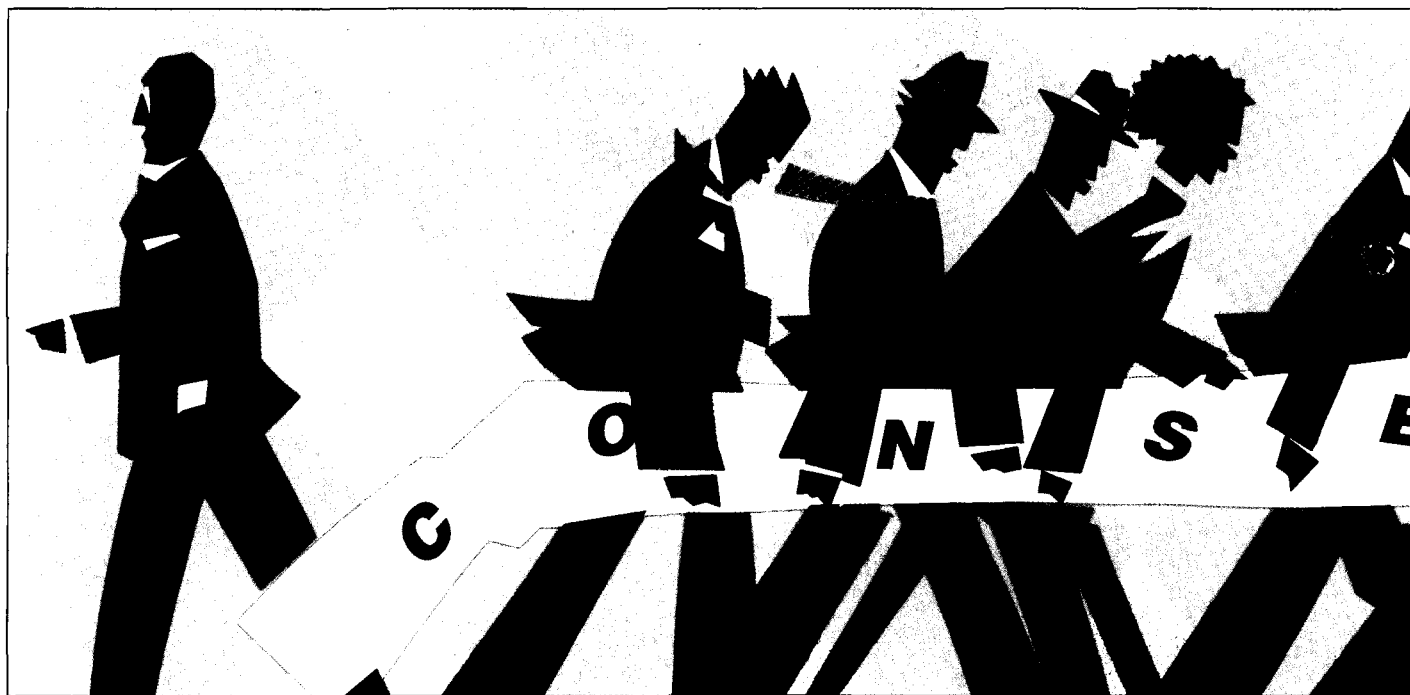
gasping for breath, through swirls of sulphur clouds
that parted to reveal, in oozing light,
covens of Harpies roosting on the walls,
and smoldering on the rock-strewn course ahead
bonfires that seemed to plead with writhing arms.

At the blackened gate, a single step removed
from sunlight, birdcalls, and the heady air
he waited for her to join him
and to catch his hand, perhaps to murmur
the lost, impetuous, redemptive word.
Instead he heard her shrill, inhuman wail,
a tunnel-echo locked into his ears,
the sound of souls unsuited for this life,
having been touched by evil past forgiveness.

Yes, he had turned, as anybody would,
as certainly she must have known he would,
and saw her whisked away, tugging at the shawl
that hid her from the world
to show him the ravaged face of all farewells
and the blank pennies of her defeated eyes.

As he sat in the dark, in the shuttered house,
Orpheus heard the women hooting in the street
outside, raving against him, blaming him
for their sister's loss. Apollo's priceless gift
lay dusty at his feet, so much a part of him
he wondered why its strings did not crack for grief.
How could he ignore those frenzied cries,
not to be assuaged except by blood,
when his own heart cried worse?
He knew a horror greater than they dreamed.

—Stanley Kunitz



Whether George Bush wins the election or not, he has already lost the affections of the conservative movement, for forgetting what Ronald Reagan, no deep thinker, never forgot—that ideas matter in politics

GRAVEDIGGER OF THE REVOLUTION

BY RICHARD BROOKHISER

“MY METAPHOR FOR THIS ADMINISTRATION,” Norman Podhoretz, the editor in chief of *Commentary*, told me over lunch, “is coitus interruptus. George Bush can’t consummate anything. Since coitus interruptus is well known to breed anxiety, the country is suffering from an anxiety attack.”

A generation or two hence historians may have to make an effort of the imagination to understand why a prominent right-of-center spokesman would be speaking in this disparaging way of the Bush Administration as it finished its fourth year. By several indicators its record was no worse than mixed, particularly from a conservative point of view. The country had undergone a long recession that had not, however, been as deep as the downturn of 1982. Bush had won two wars—three, counting the Cold War. Domestically, his enemies—who were also the conservative movement’s enemies—were in disarray. Liberalism had been searching for new ideas for more than a decade, while the Democratic Party was identified with a branch

of government wracked by scandals, from kited checks to the resignations of the speaker of the House and the House majority whip.

Yet when Podhoretz and I spoke, conservatives shared the general disappointment with George Bush. If anything, they felt it more acutely than other Americans, because it was compounded by a sense of betrayal. In January, Edwin J. Feulner Jr., the president of the Heritage Foundation, the premier conservative Beltway think tank, had declared that “our message” was in danger of being “sullied by a visionless White House pretending to be conservative.” He wrote, “Conservatives supported George Bush and they got Michael Dukakis.” Jack Kemp, Bush’s Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, although supporting the President’s re-election, publicly criticized some of the economic proposals in his State of the Union address as “gimmicks.” Those were sound bites. At the polls Patrick Buchanan, the conservative pundit and former White House speech writer, who had never even run for sheriff, still managed to pull a



third of the vote in the early Republican primaries, which included contests in states he never stumped. After Buchanan faded, some disaffected conservatives—Ed Rollins, who had been Ronald Reagan’s campaign manager in 1984; the supply-side advocate Jude Wanniski—enlisted in the short-lived telecoup campaign of Ross Perot.

Whether conservatism and its discontents matter to the rest of the country depends in part on whether the conservative message, which Feulner accused Bush of sully-ing, is correct—is what the country needs. As someone who didn’t vote for Goldwater in 1964 only because I was nine years old at the time, I assume that it is. But the conservative funk should matter to nonconservatives—at least to those who believe that ideas have a role in politics.

That belief is scarcely universal. If voters are won over and elections won solely by the manipulation of imagery, then ideology is at best a tool of cynics, at worst a distraction for manipulators and analysts alike. If Americans vote only the fatness or slimness of their wallets (as the former Ohio governor James Rhodes used to say, elections are decided by “who can put money in people’s pockets—you or the other guy,” a line often quoted by George Bush), then many of the concerns of an ideological movement will be irrelevant. But if ideas are important in politics, then the conservative diagnosis of the Bush Administration is of general interest, because for more than a dozen years conservatives have been the idea men of the Republican Party. They have been its grass-roots activists as well—a fact directly related to the seriousness with which they take their convictions, because ideas move people to organize and to campaign as well as to vote.

Lunch With Reagan

WHEN THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT FIRST encountered George Bush, in the 1980 presidential election, it had been developing for more than twenty-five years. Its view of its own history was of a long trek from the wilderness to the threshold of power. Conservative intellectuals had taken the first steps in the process in the late fifties, elaborating a domestic and foreign-policy agenda to replace older right-wing issues—McCarthyism, isolationism—that had collapsed or faded. Once the new agenda was in place, conservatism began its march through the institutions—winning the Republican presidential nomination for Barry Goldwater in 1964 and then supporting Ronald Reagan through three tries. Along the way the marchers picked up allies—the neoconservatives, or Jewish ex-liberals; the religious right, or evangelical ex-Democrats. Conservatives thought of themselves as a movement not only because they were organized and purposeful but also because they had been on the move: from fringes to mainstream, from exile to acceptance, from the pages of small-circulation journals of opinion to the big top of presidential politics.

George Bush hadn’t moved with them. His very pedigree was wrong: his father, Prescott, who was for ten years a senator from Connecticut, had belonged to the Dewey-Eisenhower wing of the Republican Party, enemy of the right in an earlier incarnation. Bush’s efforts to build up the party in his adopted state of Texas—although they certainly fit with the southern strategy, one of conservatism’s operational tenets—had always been motivated by party, rather than movement, loyalty. As Reagan ad-



What the movement expected from its partnership with George Bush was as many victories as losses, plus fidelity on essentials.

The budget deal represented betrayal on an essential, because cutting tax rates had been a winning issue for twelve years.

vanced toward the nomination grail, Bush (somewhat surprisingly) proved to be his toughest opponent.

Bush joined the movement *ex officio* when he became Reagan's running mate. He spent the next eight years laboring to earn the trust of Ronald Reagan and of the movement besides. In 1988 John Sununu, the New Hampshire governor, who would become Bush's chief of staff, gave me the conservative pro-Bush case: "George Bush has not only served this President well but has become a strong advocate for [his] agenda." Bush had only minority support within the movement during that primary season, but because the bulk of the activist right was split among Kemp, Pat Robertson, and the former Delaware governor Pete Du Pont, a minority was all he needed. Royalism and loyalism, always strong in the party, did the rest, and when conservatives faced the prospect of a Bush term, they hoped guardedly for the best from it. "I'm fairly upbeat about a Bush Administration," Jude Wanniski told me as Bush steamed to an election victory. "I think Bush really learned a lot in the last seven years from having lunched with Ronald Reagan alone." If he hadn't learned to respect the movement's principles, at least he had learned to respect what worked. Bush doesn't "care . . . about issues philosophically," Paul Weyrich, of the Free Congress Foundation, admitted to me in the fall of 1988. "But he's very curious [about] who's on which side, and why they're there, and how things come about. . . . Bush has a certain naiveté that is refreshing."

Read Our Lips

THE MOVEMENT LOST ITS NAIVETÉ IN THE SUMMER of 1990, when Bush and congressional Democrats agreed on a budget deal that set caps on spending and raised the top marginal tax rate from 28 to 31 percent. It is never necessary, though, to provide identifying details when talking about the deal to conservatives. To them, there is only one budget deal, branded in infamy. It ended the honeymoon and the marriage.

Of course, the first year and a half had not been without disappointments. The two conservative face cards in Bush's Cabinet were William Bennett and Kemp, drug czar and HUD Secretary; the first job looked like window dressing, and the second seemed to be a broom closet.

Legislation designed to clean the air and help the handicapped, signed by Bush, risked hurting the economy through overregulation. But no mature pol is disappointed by mere disappointments. They are the daily bread of politics. Everyone lets you down with some regularity, even yourself—even Ronald Reagan. What the movement expected from its partnership with George Bush was as many victories as losses, plus fidelity on essentials.

The budget deal represented betrayal on an essential, because cutting tax rates had been a winning issue for twelve years, in two senses. Pledging to cut tax rates won elections: Walter Mondale, who promised at the 1984 Democratic convention to raise them, was rewarded with thirteen electoral votes. And actually cutting them fueled the nation's longest peacetime boom—ninety-two months of expansion, from November of 1982 to July of 1990. By signing a budget deal that raised tax rates, Bush went back on an issue that the movement had thought settled, politically and intellectually.

"The unraveling of the Bush Administration on economic grounds" began in 1989, according to Robert L. Bartley, the editor of *The Wall Street Journal*. The Tax Reform Act of 1986, the last national spasm of tax-cutting, had required a compromise: in order to rationalize the tax code into three broadly lower rates, the tax rate on capital gains had actually been raised. Most of the tax-cut specialists in the movement had accepted the increase as temporary. "I figured we could come back in a couple of years," Bartley says, "and cut the capital-gains rate on straight Laffer-curve grounds"—that is, argue that lower rates would generate greater revenue. "What in fact happened was that in 1989 [Senate Majority Leader] George Mitchell managed to wear the Bush people down." Though a capital-gains cut passed in the Democratically controlled House, Mitchell led Senate Democrats in a successful obstruction. "Once the bill had gotten through the House, it ought to have been an easier sell in the Senate." But the Administration "didn't push hard enough."

Mitchell's victory, Bartley believes, "reintroduced the fairness issue"—the practice, beloved of old-style liberals, of judging tax policies not on whether they stimulated the economy or generated revenue but on how much richer they made people who were rich already. Bush and his closest advisers were for sociological reasons particularly sensitive to attacks on their "fairness." In his recent book, *The Seven Fat Years*, Bartley ticked off the alma

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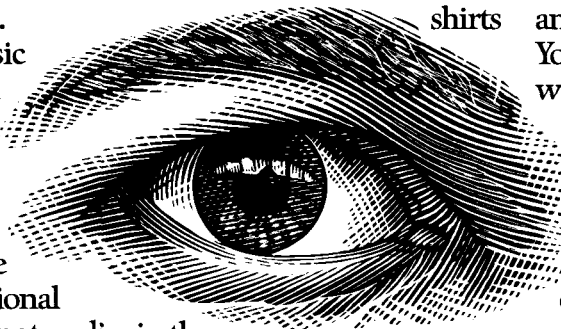


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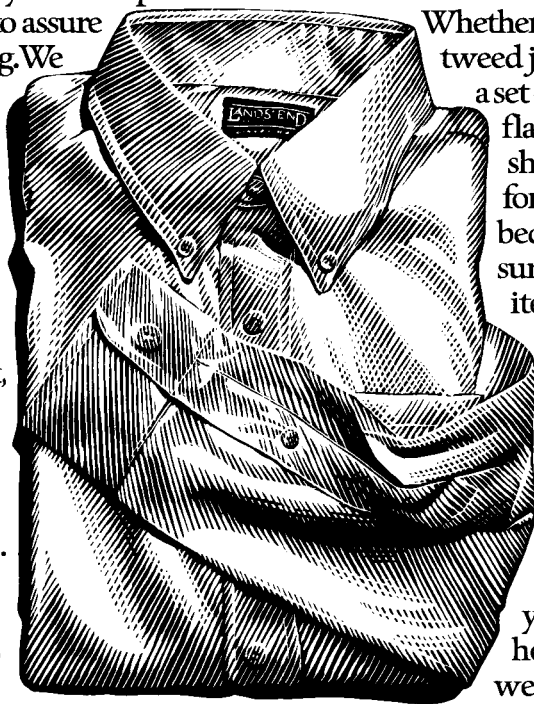
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maters of key Bush men: Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady (St. Mark's, Yale), Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher (Choate, Washington and Lee), Secretary of State James Baker (the Hill School, Princeton), Bush himself (Andover, Yale). Such products of the *haute WASPoisie* may not believe, except in cases of extreme guilt, that traveling the well-paved paths that life laid out for them is in itself unfair. But they often believe that everyone else believes it. "People of inherited wealth," Jude Wanniski says, "think the people below them want their money. They don't understand that the people below them want their *own* money." In their anxiety, "men from privileged backgrounds are not likely to be comfortable arguing that 'fairness' is bunk," Bartley wrote. "For that you need someone like Ronald Reagan, the son of a shoe salesman with alcohol problems and a graduate of Eureka College." Bartley concluded wistfully, "A former professional quarterback might do"—but Kemp was in the broom closet.

There was one very close adviser in the earliest days of the Bush Administration who was not silver-spoon—Lee Atwater (A. C. Flora High School, Newberry College). Atwater, Paul Weyrich says, "had enormous credibility with Bush, because he'd won a campaign Bush in his heart hadn't thought he could win. Whenever people in the Cabinet, including the President, came up with stupid ideas," Atwater could nix them—never on philosophical grounds, because "he didn't have much philosophy himself. But he knew what worked." Atwater understood that the tax-issue position on which Bush had campaigned "was the one theme that resonated, and that the public had believed it." But in March of 1990 Atwater was diagnosed as having a brain tumor, and he died a year later. The Bush Administration WASPs were on their own in facing congressional Democrats emboldened by the resurrection of the fairness issue.

If the budget deal had represented only dubious economics and ideological betrayal, the movement would have merely loathed it. But it was also disastrous politics. Bush's poll ratings, which had been phenomenally high, began to sink as soon as the deal was cut, and some pollsters even blame Bush's backtracking two years ago for the current popular disgust with politics-as-usual—because taxes were an issue of central importance not only to conservatives; Bush had made them central to himself in his campaign. Here, once again, are the words he used at the 1988 Republican Convention: "The Congress will push me to raise taxes, and I'll say no, and they'll push, and I'll say no, and they'll push again. And I'll say to them, Read my lips: no new taxes." Reagan himself scarcely ever made such a sweeping campaign pledge. He hadn't needed to. He was defined by a lifetime of anti-tax rhetoric and action—a record that, paradoxically, allowed him when he was in the White House to raise certain taxes now and again without paying a political price. "Whenever Reagan went off track on issues," Weyrich recalls,

"I couldn't get people to believe it. Every time I attacked Reagan, I suffered; Reagan didn't." Bush lacked the cushion of a Reaganite record on taxes. What he had instead was his pledge—until the budget deal. "When Bush decoupled from Ronald Reagan's agenda," Weyrich says, "he also decoupled from the public that had trusted him."

Chicken Kiev

BUSH HAD ONE MOMENT OF RECOUPLING WITH the public and the movement, and it was impressive. The morning after Desert Storm began, the only thing most of Bush's conservative critics didn't trust was their own judgment. "By the time George Bush called the war off," Podhoretz remembers, "I had been so humbled" by what he had accomplished "that I decided he knew what he was doing." "Of course," Podhoretz adds, "he didn't."

Most of the movement supported Bush's actions from the invasion of Kuwait through Desert Storm. If anything, pro-war conservatives were surprised that Bush acted as forthrightly as he did. In this case they, and the rest of the world (including Saddam Hussein), misjudged their man, by ignoring his background. For much of this century American diplomacy has been informed by the ethos of the establishment that has largely run it. This ethos, George Kennan wrote, "grope[d] with unfailing persistence" for "formal criteria of a juridical nature by which the permissible behavior of states could be defined." When Saddam Hussein hoovered up Kuwait, he violated juridical criteria about as grossly as it is possible to do. It was entirely in character for someone of George Bush's station to move half a million soldiers around the world to undo the deed.

Once it became clear, however, that Desert Storm had essentially restored the *status quo ante*—that undoing Saddam Hussein's deed was all that it had done—the movement was distressed. All the Administration's efforts to engineer an anti-Saddam Hussein coup did not mollify it. "We stopped three days short," Feulner says, "and didn't get rid of the SOB, who may still be there when George Bush has retired to Kennebunkport."

The endgame of the Gulf War suggested a generic problem with Bush's foreign policy. "Despite his rhetoric, Bush has consistently favored the Old World Order over the New World Order," Podhoretz says. "The informing idea of George Bush's foreign policy is that stability is the be-all and end-all. In every case [of crisis or conflict] except Israel the initial effort has been to maintain a status quo."

The status quo the movement liked least was the Soviet Union during the last years of Mikhail Gorbachev. Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher had also been fans of Gorbachev's, and Bush could claim to be simply following their example. But as the eighties passed into

the nineties and it became evident that *perestroika* was a political balancing act rather than a program for continued reform, Bush's dogged support for its author rankled. On the eve of the August coup Bush went to the Ukraine—which, as a republic of the Soviet Union, still took an article—to warn against “suicidal nationalism”; the conservative columnist William Safire dubbed it “the Chicken Kiev speech.” After the coup the United States was the thirty-seventh nation to recognize the Baltic states, neck-and-neck with Mongolia. Bush's defense of his go-slow policy is that it didn't break, so it didn't need to be fixed. That is, because the transition from Gorbachev and the Soviet Union to Yeltsin, Russia, and the Commonwealth of Independent States has been peaceful, give or take a war or two in the Caucasus, Bush did the right thing in backing the old as long and the new as late as he did. But conservatives focus on the time that was lost. “There was a five-hundred-day period from October, 1990, to March, 1992,” Feulner says, “in which we could very easily have had a new set of democratic states, with realigned economies starting from a much higher base. Had we not been propping up Gorby, we would have been on the road to reform earlier.”

History repeated itself, this time as tragedy, in Yugoslavia. Feulner says, “James Baker's Belgrade speech in June, 1991,” appealing for Yugoslavian unity, “delayed unified European action for six months,” allowing the Boris Pugos of Serbia to consolidate their position and thus enabling them to reduce Dubrovnik and Sarajevo to rubble. Conservatives feel that in China, where the transition to freedom has not yet occurred, Bush has cosseted the leaders who bloodily forestalled it at Tiananmen Square. “The Reaganite policy,” Podhoretz says, “would have been to side with the democratic insurgency,” though he concedes that “Reagan might have betrayed his own policy.” He finds the Bush Administration's “fixation on relations with China very difficult to understand.” The rationale for playing the China card, he says, “used to be that China was a counterweight to the Soviet Union. We are now trying to develop a new rationale: that it is a counterweight to Japan. That's all desperate.”

Conservative supporters of the Gulf War have continued to re-examine that famous victory. “Even if the Bush Administration had toppled Saddam Hussein,” Podhoretz says, “they wanted to replace him with some Ba'athist thug who would hold Iraq together”—yet another counterweight, in this case against the menace of Iran. It was Bush's concern for adjusting the regional equipoise that caused him to support Saddam Hussein up to the eve of the invasion. “Bush and Baker,” Feulner says, “are responsible for April Glaspie,” the American ambassador to Iraq who told Saddam Hussein that border disputes were of no concern to us. “We have to look at the causes of the war.”

Last year held one other serious disappointment for the movement besides the Iraqi dictator's survival. In

November, George Bush signed the Civil Rights Act, which reverses recent Supreme Court decisions limiting the reach of affirmative-action programs. Bush had assailed earlier versions of it as a “quota bill,” because the only way an employer could assure himself of avoiding affirmative-action litigation under its provisions would be by adopting de facto quotas in hiring. That analysis enraged the civil-rights lobby and other supporters of the bill—largely, one suspects, because they knew it was true, and politically damning. The civil-rights lobby was already reeling from Clarence Thomas's confirmation to the Supreme Court the month before. Quite apart from the psychodrama of Anita Hill's charges and Thomas's denials, the elevation to a position of such prominence of a black conservative who rejected many of the lobby's views undermined its claim to represent black opinion. Bush chose this moment of political and psychological advantage to hand his enemies a victory. The Administration claimed that the bill had been improved, and Bush issued an interpretive memo accompanying his signature which sought to put the best construction on it. But his basic motivation seemed to be discomfort with the conservative position he had previously staked out. “George Bush really didn't like the Willie Horton stuff” three years earlier, Weyrich speculates. “He was looking for ways to demonstrate that he was not anti-civil rights.” This last backtrack was what finally tipped Buchanan into the race.

The Pinkerton Defense

FOR CONSERVATIVES, THE BUSH RECORD HAS NOT been all grim. In two important areas the President has lived up to the movement's expectations, or even exceeded them.

Four years ago the unhappiest Bush supporters in the movement were opponents of abortion. The message Bush “exudes to the activists,” James P. McFadden, the editor of *The Human Life Review*, told me before the 1988 election, “is that it's an issue he doesn't care about. Most of them I'm in touch with are working for him, but they're bitching.” Four years later doubts still linger. “Bush suffers from two problems,” McFadden says now. “He doesn't know the lingo on the issue—it's like talking baseball to a guy who doesn't know the game—and there is nobody around George Bush who is anti-abortion, while there are an awful lot of people, especially his wife, who are pro.” Nevertheless, the right-to-lifers are in Bush's camp, because Bush has stuck with them for four years. “As a matter of honor, we owe Bush our vote for what he's done,” McFadden says. “You get little enough out of politicians; it's crazy not to vote for them when they do something for you.”

The movement has also been satisfied with Bush's judicial appointments, despite anger over Justice David Souter's contributions to recent decisions reaffirming the



For the past two and a half years the movement that spent the eighties on top of the political world has watched the pieces of its agenda drift out to sea. This is bad for George Bush, because he has needed an agenda to be a successful President.

principles of *Roe v. Wade* and the toxicity of school prayer. Bush has nominated conservative jurists—thanks to the advice of C. Boyden Gray, the counselor to the President—and has backed up his nominees. The Bush Administration “put more muscle into the Thomas fight than the Reagan Administration” put into the losing battle over Judge Robert Bork’s Supreme Court nomination, Bork himself says.

There are even stray members of the movement who will defend Bush’s record in general. The most eloquent is James P. Pinkerton, formerly the deputy assistant to the President for policy planning. Last April, Pinkerton gave a speech at the Kennedy School of Government depicting Bush as a world-historical figure. “The great wave of our time,” Pinkerton explained, “is the de-bureaucratization, de-socialization, and de-communization of America and the world.” Bush is riding this wave, “creating a new post-bureaucratic society.” Pinkerton gave examples: the Child Care Act of 1990, “a milestone . . . establishing the principle that parents, not bureaucrats, should decide who should care for kids”; the emissions-trading provisions of the Clean Air Act, which “harness for the first time the power of market forces to the task of environmental protection”; tenant management and ownership of public housing; and choice in schools. Pinkerton dwelt at length on the movement for school choice, whose “Harper’s Ferry” he identified as the Wisconsin alliance of Polly Williams, a black Democratic state representative, and Tommy Thompson, the conservative Republican governor, to start a pilot program of school vouchers in Milwaukee. Because of these efforts, Pinkerton argued, the President whom Bush most resembles is Abraham Lincoln: “Both came in as moderates, both tried to conciliate,” both ended by ushering in a “new paradigm for American society.”

When I spoke to Pinkerton, he conceded that Bush is “not the kind of communicator” that the author of the Gettysburg Address was, but he insisted that the anti-bureaucratic message gets across nonetheless. “In almost every speech he gives, George Bush mentions school choice. Does it make the front page of *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*? No, of course not. But in every audience there is one person who thinks, Why don’t I do that for myself? The seed of the key question of who decides—bureaucrats or citizens—is being planted everywhere across the country.” Speeches are fine, I said, but

what about action? Why, when Pinkerton spoke at the Kennedy School about school choice, did he have to cite the actions of Williams and Thompson, rather than those of, say, Lamar Alexander, Bush’s Secretary of Education? “If the President had not been talking” about the issue, Pinkerton replied, “it would have been too easy for Wisconsin establishmentarians to knock it down.”

Jack Kemp, still soldiering on at HUD, makes a similar argument. What conservatives have gained over the past four years has been “nothing of legislative substance as much as changing the terms of the debate.” “It is fair to say,” Kemp admits, that his own hobbyhorses, such as tenant ownership and urban enterprise zones, “weren’t sufficiently pushed.” But he lays the “preponderance of the burden of resistance” on Congress.

To sum up the conservative pro-Bush argument of 1992: Bush is a peer of Lincoln’s, because of half a dozen initiatives that on close inspection often turn out to be speeches about initiatives—speeches that are, admittedly, not Lincoln-esque. No wonder the rest of the movement isn’t buying the argument. Even granting that rhetoric is all that a Democratic Congress will permit Bush to achieve, why is the rhetoric scattered in discrete speeches, instead of being fused into a coherent political agenda? When Harry Truman failed to push his agenda through the Eightieth Congress, he branded it the “do-nothing Congress,” and salvaged a losing presidential campaign. Conservatives disagree about some of the pet projects of their lonely soulmates in the Bush Administration: for instance, since most people—rich, middling, and poor—don’t work where they live, why favor enterprise zones in slums over pro-business tax cuts across the board? But these objections can’t be raised, because the projects themselves haven’t been raised in any serious way; the Bush Administration as a whole is not serious about them. After the Los Angeles riots Kemp was plucked from his broom closet and given unwonted prominence. As the riots fade in memory, what is to prevent him from being shut up once more?

Pinkerton gave his first speech on “the new paradigm” almost two years to the day before his speech at the Kennedy School. It provoked a response, some months later, from Budget Director Richard Darman, which Washingtonians thought of as witty. Darman’s title gives the flavor: “Neo-Neo-ism: Reflections on Hubble-ism, Rationalism, and the Pursuit of Excellence (After the Fis-

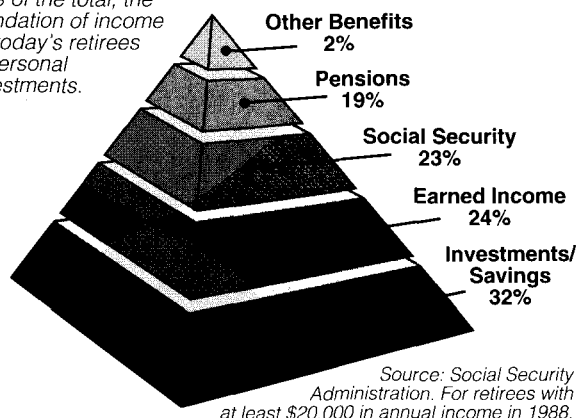
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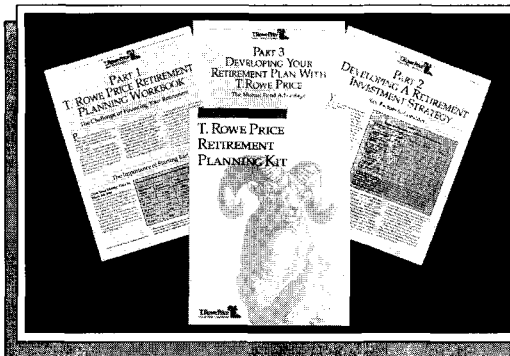
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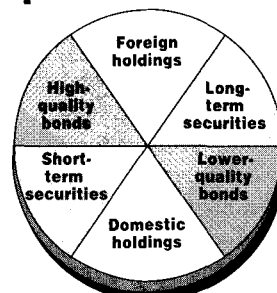
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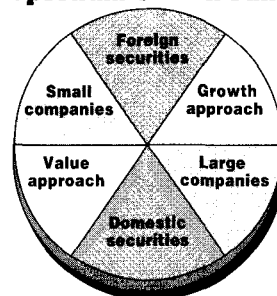
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cal Follies).” If Bush is Lincoln, then Darman must be witty. “The problem with all these New Thises and New Thats,” Darman said, “is that, however seriously intended, they can be little more than slogans. . . . They do not actually solve problems. They leave undecided most of the hard choices of detailed program design and resource allocation.” They make Bush advisers say, Forget it.

Conservatives attacked Darman’s attack on the new paradigm, and most scorekeepers of the dustup awarded Pinkerton the moral victory. But Darman remained budget director, while Pinkerton was seconded from the White House to the Bush-Quayle campaign committee, where, as a conservative who believes in something, he can be closer to the rhetoric and further from the hard choices.

Even as scattered disappointments may not ultimately disappoint, so scattered satisfactions do not necessarily satisfy. Abortion, the judiciary, a sprinkling of speeches—these are better than anything the movement could expect from any conceivable Democrat. But they aren’t enough.

“Nothing Fails Like Success”

FOR THE PAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS THE MOVEMENT that spent the eighties on top of the political world has watched the pieces of its agenda drift out to sea. This is bad for George Bush, because he has needed an agenda to be a successful President and to compile a record on which to run for re-election, but he gives no sign of replacing his abandoned conservative one with any alternative. Problem-solving, the goal of Darman and practical men in all ages and times, cannot take the place of ideas, because without ideas the problem-solver has no way of knowing which problems are most important, or what the range of tolerable solutions might be. Success alone can never be a guide to political action, for “nothing,” as G. K. Chesterton wrote, “fails like success.”

“If you don’t have an alternative,” Feulner asks, “what’s the answer? Falling asleep on the ‘no’ button? The fundamental error in politics is to assume that the other guy is standing still. If you’re standing on the defensive, and not constantly pushing, you’re only going to lose more slowly.”

Bush’s derelictions have been bad for the movement as well. The movement certainly performed badly on the hustings this year. In a parliamentary democracy Bush’s betrayals would have caused resignations and rebellion. Even under the American system a political sect worth its salt would have offered a protest candidate. But the glamour boys of the right—Kemp, Bennett, Pete Du

Pont—sat out the dance, and the task fell to Buchanan. So the movement’s notion of a fit challenger to a President whose few accomplishments include giving speeches was someone whose only accomplishment was writing them. At that, Buchanan had twice as much relevant experience as Ross Perot.

But the real damage that the movement has suffered at Bush’s hands is intellectual. It has lost ground that it had thought of as secure, and it has lost time that ought to have been spent developing new approaches to new problems. Weyrich mentions a few: “Deficits—no one talks about them. The deteriorating culture—no one touches it” (no one, that is, apart from Vice President Quayle, the antagonist of *Murphy Brown*). “In the late seventies polls showed that the word ‘conservative’ had a positive image. As we come into the mid-nineties, that is no longer true. The Reagan-Bush coalition is dead. The movement that existed has been shattered. The principles it stood for are still true, but we need to find a way to reassert them.”

After the doldrums of the Bush years, some conservatives have given up even the effort of reassertion. Wick Allison, a former publisher of *National Review*, first met George Bush twenty-four years ago. Bush got him his first job, on the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest. Early this summer, the summer of our discontent, Allison lined up behind Ross Perot, not as a candidate with whom he agreed but as a force of nature—a destructive force of nature. “I’ve got two choices,” Allison told me, speaking just before Perot’s exit. “To hold my nose and vote for Bush, or to throw a nuclear bomb. I know Perot’s not good on abortion or gay rights”—he might have added industrial policy, free trade, the Gulf War. “But let’s throw the bomb anyway.”

Isn’t that desperation? I asked.

“Absolutely,” he said. “Desperation and disgust. Issues,” he went on, “do not matter; overarching themes matter—leadership, betrayal, the feeling that our country’s falling apart. We think issues won the 1980 election, but they didn’t. The guy who won just happened to be our guy. The decision in the voting booth is an emotional decision, not a calculation—not even a calculation of self-interest.” Bombs away.

Perot, as it turned out, did not outlast the lightning bugs. Yet the temptation he posed to Allison and other equally desperate conservatives is troubling. The conclusion that someone like Perot might be an acceptable alternative because issues don’t in fact affect elections is only a step away from thinking that issues don’t affect politics—that, indeed, ideas don’t. It would be ironic if George Bush’s true accomplishment were to remake the movement in his own image. □

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Students at three high schools in northwestern suburbs of Chicago now can take classes their schools might not have been able to afford otherwise — thanks to a system provided by Ameritech.

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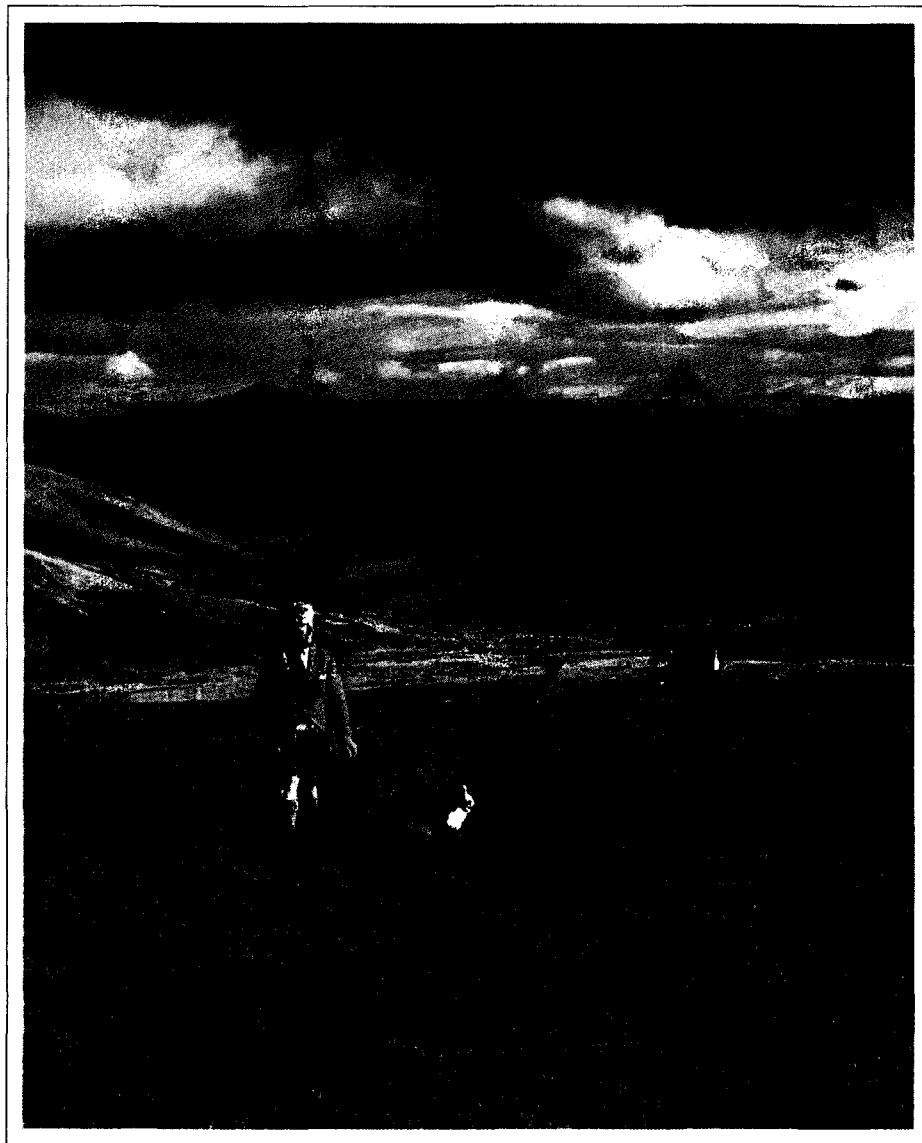
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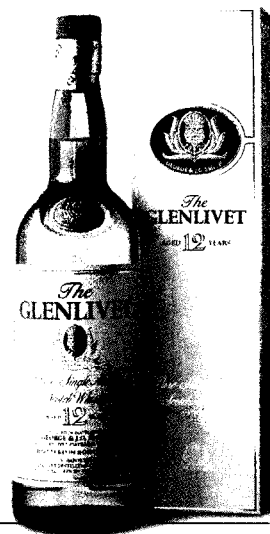


Sandy Milne and trusty companion, Ambrose.

*H*is Majesty was gracing Scotland with a state visit at the time. He brought with him a powerful thirst for The Glenlivet single malt Scotch.

As his host's daughter, Elizabeth Grant, recorded in her memoirs: "Lord Corynham, the Chamberlain, was looking everywhere for the pure Glenlivet whisky: the King drank nothing else."

A bottle was swiftly brought up from the cellar and pressed into the king's hands. "What is not recorded," says our own Sandy Milne, "is whether His Majesty gave anyone else a sniff of the stuff."



What is a single malt Scotch?

A single malt is Scotch the way it was originally: one single whisky, from one single distillery. Not, like most Scotch today, a blend of many whiskies. The Glenlivet single malt Scotch whisky should therefore be compared to a château-bottled wine. Blended Scotch is more like a mixture of wines from different vineyards.

**The Glenlivet.
The Father of All Scotch.**

A Short Story

*Courier*by *Graham Hewson*

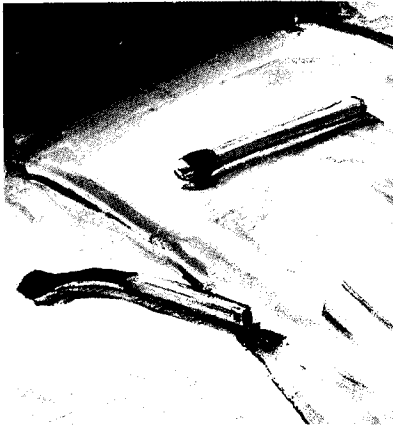
THE DAY BEFORE THANKS-giving the police found my truck. It had been stolen three days before from a lumberyard on South Broadway in Eureka, and then been driven east over the mountains and abandoned on a logging road outside Redding. I couldn't imagine why anyone would want a rusted '79 Courier with ninety thousand on it, though it did have a 2.3 Ford engine. The policeman who took the report said a Courier's an easy mark because the ignition switch is on the dash, not on the steering column.

I had to take a Greyhound to Redding. Towing the Courier to the impound garage cost eighty-five dollars, then another thirty-five a day for storage. If I didn't go right away, the truck would sit over the holiday weekend, and I didn't have the two fifty or three hundred it would cost on Monday. I couldn't take the VW because Beth, my wife, was picking her mother up at the airport. I wouldn't take the Bug anyway, because Route 299 is a dangerous road.

Missing some hours with Beth's mother wouldn't kill me. Edie stays in a motel but she spends most of her time sitting on the deck outside the Airstream, looking over the two acres of private clear-cut she helped us buy a couple of years ago. When we visit Edie at her condo down south she usually wears a calf-length skirt and pumps, a matching sweater and maybe a little makeup. When she stays with us she wears jeans, a San Diego Chargers sweatshirt, and red Reeboks that have looked new for ten years. She sits in a deck chair sipping gin and tonics and thumbing through catalogues she never orders from.

"You know, if this was a two-story trailer maybe we could see the bay." This after her third drink, sitting out on the deck.

Dream houses are fine, but building them takes real



money. Beth and I like what we've got, and when the weather's good, we sleep out on the deck. It's a nice piece of work. I built it with some of the last old-growth redwood you'll ever find.

The bus was empty in Eureka so I took a window seat, and at the Arcata station I put my feet up on the aisle seat and closed my eyes. I could feel people stop and look, then move on to other seats. In my life, riding the bus means you were caught short. It means that for whatever reason, you're not in charge, you've lost a certain

kind of freedom you get from a car, even a beater like my truck.

North on 101, east on 299, the bus climbed the ridge past the old highway from Blue Lake. Behind me was a young-sounding woman going to Weaverville, and another, probably a student, announced too loudly that she was meeting friends in Redding to drive to Seattle.

The Greyhound stopped in Willow Creek and picked up some Indians from Hoopa. I forgot to fake sleep and a black-haired man in a fatigue jacket took the aisle seat. A woman, maybe his wife, sat across the aisle and gestured to him to ask me to move. He put his head back, closed his eyes, and took both armrests, sinking turtlelike into his jacket.

I had on a red Gore-Tex windbreaker because I'd searched the trailer but couldn't find my leather flyer's jacket with HURRICANE fading across the back in yellow letters. Now I remembered leaving it behind the seat in the Courier.

Rain in Weaverville. The bus driver unloaded packages from the luggage compartments for a blonde lady in cowboy boots. I got off the bus to use a phone, and through the open door of the phone booth the air came in cold and biting. My breath steamed. The operator at Eureka PD put me on hold. I'd used up almost all my

*He was tired, he said, of feeling sorry for both of them.
Then don't come back, she said*

change by the time she returned. "I'll have to find the officer who has that report," she said. In the background another line rang. "A jacket, you said?"

"Yes. It's—"

"Can you hold?"

The line froze. I put in my last two nickels and cradled the phone on my shoulder so that I could rub my cold arms. This lady was sitting at a desk, with flat hair and a headset on, pads of paper in front of her and maybe racks of skewered notes, or one of those spinning things like in a diner. *Case 429, jacket.* The line went dead and I hung up.

Outside town two Highway Patrol four-by-fours were pulled off at a turnout, but they hadn't opened up the CHAINS REQUIRED signs yet. I needed to get back over 299 before the snow.

The bus rolled down toward I-5, the fields and hills black and volcanic north toward Shasta and east to Lassen. Redding's Greyhound had been a gas station once. A cab was parked in one of the mechanic's bays; I woke the driver and he took me across town to the impound yard. Gary's Wreck & Tow was a small battleship-gray building with a yard surrounded by a Cyclone fence.

A young kid anxious to leave—it was four-thirty—searched the pockets of his blue overalls for a pen and then shifted from foot to foot while I looked over the papers he'd handed me.

"There," he said, pointing at the line that said *Signature*. His fingernail was traced black with grease.

I signed, and we headed through the yard.

"We specialize in Fiats," he told me. "We got more Fiats than anybody on I-5."

We walked through rows of small cars, all Fiats, stacked on top of one another. The thick smell of gear oil rose from the wet ground.

"More than Sacramento, more than Portland even," he said.

My truck was inside a fenced-off area with half a dozen other impounds. Most had been involved in accidents. A few drops of rain fell, heavy, slapping on the oil-soaked mud.

"We ship parts anywhere, UPS to Seattle all the time," the kid said.

A phone rang over a loudspeaker and he hurried stiff-legged back toward the building.

SEATTLE. WHEN BETH AND I WERE YOUNG WE stayed at an inn on Puget Sound. It rained all four days, but that was okay with us. We pushed the queen-size bed up to the window overlooking the creek that fed into the sound. Fresh from the shower, we lay on our stomachs and watched as river otters left the creek mouth for the cold water and fish of the sound.

I'd met Beth at a party that week. "The Navy?" she said. "You?" She brushed the hair back from my face. "They'd cut C's around your ears."

I was nineteen and restless when I told the Navy recruiter in Eureka I would sign if he'd guarantee me the South Pacific and a chance to dive at Truk Lagoon. I'd seen a slide show of the sunken Japanese fleet given by a local diver who ran excursions. I wanted to swim in the wrecks, to see the unbroken china and the schools of fish darting among the bones of the dead soldiers. I wanted, undeniably, to know I'd really been somewhere.

The party was in someone's living room and the TV was tuned to *National Geographic*. A small man with a snorkel clutched the fluke of a swimming whale. Wouldn't you like to swim with the whales in Mexico? Beth said. Wouldn't that be something? She was restless in that room, shifting from one foot to the other, quick to catch pieces of other conversations. I felt her life about to move and everything she said or did—repeatedly glancing at her watch, the way she said *The Navy?*, as if it was the easy way out—dared me to go with her. That night, because the moon was full, we drove to the beach and swam in the August ocean. When the Navy called I was on Puget Sound, watching otters.

"Mike, I forgot my things," Beth had told me the first night. I sat on the bed, hard, the curve and small of her back making me want her. "But we're probably safe," she said.

We played cards in bed and drank a Greek wine called retsina that smelled like cut pine. When the trip was over I worried for weeks until Beth said it was okay. I thought we were going to take the world by storm and a child would be an obstacle to the kind of life that was in front of us. I imagined an entire winter on the Sea of Cortés, marked by the final days when, spring arriving and the whales gone back to the arctic, we would swim alone in the empty sea.

Beth worked in bulk grains at the co-op and I'd gotten into fence-making, reconstructing period work for the Victorians in town that all seemed to be turning into doctors' offices or suites for lawyers. In two years we saved enough to spend four good months in Mexico. Then Beth saw an ad in the *Tri-City Weekly* for a downtown storefront and got it into her head to put our money into opening a video rental.

"I don't want to live a life that needs vacations," she told me. "I want us to always be in charge."

I'd lost several jobs to lower bidders and I was realizing that fence construction wasn't much of a specialty, but I'd been working hard and imagining the underwater photos of exotic sea creatures we could show our friends when we got back. This risk-everything attitude was something new in Beth, and it made me anxious. I started to wonder if she'd ever be satisfied with anything.

"Two years, maybe three," she said. "Then our lives will be our own."

Different Schools Of Thought Thrive In The Same Company



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I DIDN'T FEEL MUCH LIKE OUR LIVES WERE OUR own as I waited for the kid to find the impound-gate key on a ring full of unmarked keys.

Whoever stole the truck was a heavy smoker. The smell came out stale when I opened the driver's door, and the ashtray was crammed with butts. I flipped the seat forward—no jacket. The rain fell heavier so I got in the truck, shut the door and rolled the passenger window down. The ignition switch was gone; three thick wires hung below the dash. Two empty red cigarette packs were on the seat. Pall Malls, no filters. On the floor were six empty Colt 45 cans; the plastic stringer was there too, folded, stretched, all the loops broken.

There were two thieves, the smoker on the right: the floor by the passenger's seat was littered with burned wooden matches, and the windshield on that side was smoked in streaks where the matches were struck and lit. There was an oily touch to the glass and then a sulfur smell on my fingers. The driver had eaten Chee-tos and stuffed the bag under the seat. The Swiss Army knife and the tire gauge were gone from the glove compartment. I took a butt from the ashtray and held it with two fingers the way a smoker would. What was it like to run, to leave one place behind and head for somewhere else? They drove over 299 knowing the Courier's locked gas cap meant they'd have to steal again when the gas was gone. They must've talked, because the radio had broken years ago when the heater leaked and flooded the dash. Their words were barely gone. I could almost reach them, feel their cut speech on the grip of the wheel.

An unlit match had worked itself partly under the seat back. I cleaned the lint off the blue-and-white tip and struck it next to the gray marks on the windshield. It flared yellow and eased some, the flame burning tear-shaped down the matchstick. Why did they go to Redding? On the way to Sacramento, points south? No. East, where California turns to Nevada, fades into Utah, and on. Sacramento, I-5 south, was too easy. I shook the match out before it burned my fingers. The kid was holding a split trash bag up against the rain.

"Have to hot-wire it," he said, leaning in the passenger window. He tossed a roll of black electrical tape onto the seat. "The red one's live. Tape the blue one to it—"

The ignition lights came on.

"Touch the black one to those and she'll kick," he told me.

The engine fired and whined high, the choke sticking the way it does sometimes in the cold. The kid held out his hand and I gave him back the tape.

It was five and nearly dark, as if the storm had taken the day out. I drove around town, the rain drumming on the roof of the Courier. I pulled into a gas station, realizing that to turn the Courier off I would have to unwrap the wires. The tape stuck to itself and finally the attendant sold me, for ten bucks, half a roll he found in a mechanic's toolbox. There was a pay phone next to the can-

dy machine in the station office. I'd have to call Beth collect. I wasn't sure how much I could tell her; we hadn't had an unguarded conversation for what suddenly seemed like a long time. In the past few years I had caught myself rehearsing how to put the simplest things, and what to leave out altogether.

SEVEN MONTHS AFTER BETH AND I OPENED Video Variety, Blockbuster came in a few blocks away with thousands and thousands of titles. They bought our stock at auction when we closed. We kept all the National Geographic specials and the Thin Man series, and for Christmas we gave Edie a Betamax with a handle on it so that she could take it with her wherever she might go.

The Sea of Cortés was still on the map, though it felt a little farther off. Three years later, after we had saved, again, all we could, a guy I knew from high school offered us a split in an all-night diner on 101. A restaurant seemed like a safe bet; everybody on the road needs a cup of coffee and a cheeseburger, and there's always truckers on 101. But we had no graveyard cook, so Beth and I took turns sleeping on a cot by the walk-in freezer. Five months after we opened, Todd, my high school buddy, was arrested for growing pot on some land he owned in Piercy. They put the cuffs on him while he was working the grill, and when Beth and I got there, the place was empty, the food cold on the plates.

This second failure made us quiet. We could've gone to Mexico on a thousand, maybe fifteen hundred, dollars—anybody can save that much—but we couldn't admit that we'd lost our chance to be in charge. That was the big failure, and saving our change and scraping our way to Mexico wasn't going to erase the damage we'd done.

We went on with our lives. Beth got us on a swimming kick at the community pool. She taped the schedule on the refrigerator, the free-swim hours highlighted in yellow. First we did ten laps a day, then twenty-five, and before long we were doing forty like we'd been born in the water. It was good for us, and healthy, but there was something serious in it for Beth. I was back to making fences, and I worked my schedule so I wouldn't miss our daily swim unless I really had to.

One Saturday afternoon I watched a group of children taking lessons in the shallow end. I picked out a blonde girl I named Gina, following her from the paddleboard kicks that frothed up the water to her first strokes at the crawl. One of her parents knelt by the pool, waiting with a Bart Simpson beach towel. What a nice way to focus your life. You could put your mind to raising a child, and maybe your mistakes could get put to use in a constructive way. I didn't say anything about mistakes to Beth, just said it straight out: a kid would be nice.

"Why not?" I said. We were treading water at midpool. Beth adjusted her goggles. She looked over to where



Gina's class was swimming tiny laps in the shallow end.

"Which one do you want?" she said.

"Beth. I'm serious."

She slapped some water at me and swam off. I held my breath and swam under her, tickling and teasing her legs, listening to the sound of her laughing underwater.

After three months of trying to have a kid Beth pulled up one day in the shallow end of the pool. I stopped next to her, crouched low in the water.

"It's not going to happen," she said. She brushed the wet hair from my face.

"What?" I looked past her to a class of children practicing floating, their cheeks round with air.

"We're not going to have a child." The tone in her voice told me we'd bottomed out again, and it was like shooting for fifty laps and finding ourselves back at ten.

"We'll just try harder," I said.

Beth grabbed my shoulders. "I went to the clinic," she said. Water dripped from her face. "It's not going to happen."

I pulled Beth to me and caught something in her face, a coldness, a look from a stranger who needed to move on. But she smiled and came back.

"What now?" I said.

"What else?" Beth said, squeezing my hand. "Do more laps."

A few days later Edie gave us the money for the land and the trailer, supposedly as an investment. I know she was trying to get our minds off everything that hadn't worked out, and I have to admire her for it. She's always telling me I should get a couple of goats, and I say I'll look into that. Beth never said another thing about having a child, and I haven't brought it up again. She'd say it's just the short straws and nothing we could say would change anything. I would've sworn I knew her inside and out, but now when she's quiet, a little sullen, I get resentful at her leaving me so alone.

IN THE GAS-STATION OFFICE I WAITED WHILE the operator made the connection. Outside, the Redding sky was jammed with blackening clouds driven east by the wind. Beth and Edie would be inside the trailer now, sitting at the built-in Formica table, shaking up the lettered dice of a word game and keeping an eye on the tiny hourglass timer. If I were there, I would excuse myself and go out on the deck, breathing the cold air and looking up at the stars in the night sky, feeling trapped by my strange family, but also feeling responsible to them, never quite able not to love some part of what went on. Shadows bigger than life would press against the trailer's windows, and Edie would tell Beth she can't use *x-ray* without the dash.

Beth accepted the charges. "The police been calling," she said. Her voice changed when she drank, her l's seeming to fill her mouth. The plastic bottles of tonic would be going flat by the small stainless sink, and if Edie had been mixing, the top would be off the gin—kill any germs get in there, she often said.

"They have somebody there in jail," Beth said. "They want you to go by."

"Great," I said. "Now I have to go to the jail?"

Beth laughed. "You'll get time off for good behavior."

I felt Edie sitting there, and I could hear rain on the roof of the Airstream. Outside the overhang of the station it was really coming down. On the wall next to the phone was a map of Redding; I traced my finger along 299 toward Eureka, letting myself get angry at Beth and her witty remarks. Then I touched I-5, a wide blue line running south and off the map. I was already away from Thanksgiving. I had enough money for one more tank of gas; I could drive the truck dry, hitchhike, and if nothing bad happened, I'd be there in two, maybe three, days. I could swim alone in the Sea of Cortés. I could leave Beth to the trailer and Edie, to no money and no everything else. I held my finger on the map, knowing that thinking about running was as bad as doing it.

"We need to talk," I said.

"Talk?" Beth said.

A car pulled up to the pumps, its tires sucking at the wet pavement. "Are you happy?" I asked. I had her at a

disadvantage—she was a little drunk, and Edie was there in the room. It was an edge that boosted my courage but at the same time made me feel small.

"Happy—?" She muffled the phone but I could still hear the trailer door close and maybe Edie's footsteps on the deck. "Why are you asking, Mike?"

"Just a little curious, I guess."

I heard the ice in the glass up next to the phone. "You know," Beth said, "I'd have to think about that."

"What's there to think about?"

She laughed. "Silly word. Happy."

"Nothing silly about it."

"Hey," she said. "Mike. What's going on over there? Why you going at me like this?"

The air was cold enough that I could see my breath, but my hand was sweaty on the phone and my heart was jumping.

"I'm tired of feeling sorry for us," I said.

Beth took in a quick breath, like someone spit ice water down her back. "Okay," she said. "Feel good and sorry. Sorry for yourself."

A semi eased by in low gear. I watched the gas attendant ring some money into the register. What was I doing? This was Beth I was talking to. She was a good person who'd never gotten the good breaks. Where did I come off hurting her feelings, long distance, on Thanksgiving?

"Beth," I said, imagining her face in the sound of her name. "I miss you. I was driving around here thinking how we have a pretty good life if you look at it."

"You were driving around feeling sorry for us."

I snapped my finger on the blue line of I-5 and a spider dropped down from behind the map. "That's not what I meant."

"But that's what you said."

"I'm tired," I said. The air was getting colder and I wished I had my flyer's jacket.

"Don't come back here if you're feeling sorry—"

"Come on, Beth, I told you. It's Thanksgiving and I'm standing around in a gas station, freezing."

For a while there was only line noise: me at a pay phone in Redding, and Beth sitting around back home.

"You should see the truck," I finally said.

"We can't afford to fix it," she said.

I breathed easier. We were getting back to normal.

"Do you know about the road?" she asked.

"Probably it's still open."

I thought she put the phone to her other ear. "Okay," she said. "Mike?"

"Yeah?"

"Are *you* happy?"

The spider worked its way back up behind the map. I palmed it flat between the map and the wall. "Sure," I said. "Except for being in Redding in a truck I have to start with pieces of tape. Sure," I told her. "Of course I'm happy. I've always been happy with you."

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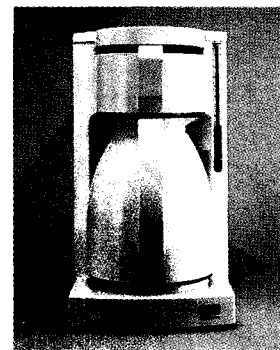
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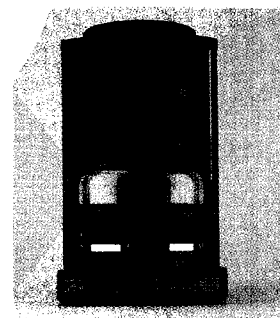
last cup has as much flavor and aroma as the first.

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"Really?"

"You bet."

The trailer door slammed shut again.

"You want to say hi to my mother?"

"Sorry, but I'm off to jail."

She laughed a sweet laugh, the one that always meant I'd pulled her out of it for now.

AT THE POLICE STATION A DETECTIVE NAMED Holman led me through a steel gate and down a corridor lined with shut doors. He wore Levi's, cowboy boots, and a black silk Raiders jacket. He was too young to be as bored as he was.

"Dispatcher in Eureka called, said something about a coat—" He turned on his heel and raised his eyebrows. "Right?"

I nodded.

Holman walked again. "What do you do?"

"I'm sorry?"

"In Eureka. What do you do?"

"Oh," I said. "Fences. Decorative fences."

"Yeah? *Decorative?*"

"For Victorians."

"Yeah?"

We stopped by a door with a clipboard hanging on it. He took the clipboard and flipped through some paperwork. The silver Raiders' emblem on Holman's jacket was the hard-lined face of a man in a football helmet, a patch over one eye.

"Are you from Oakland?" I asked.

He looked at me over the clipboard. "Yeah," he lied.

I rolled another wooden match from the Courier between my fingers. He opened the door into a small room and went in before me. He left the lights off.

"Suspect was picked up shoplifting cigarettes, several blocks away from the site of another truck theft. Her partner must've run when he saw the black-and-white." Holman leaned against the wall next to the window, the mirror.

"Just like the movies," he said. "She can't see you."

The woman was five-four maybe, in broken-up brown pumps, out-of-style designer jeans blackening with dirt, a blue T-shirt covered by a torn yellow one with a tractor graphic and the words SELL IT IN THE ATHENS GAZETTE. Her hair fell just below her shoulders; her face was lined, unsmiling, practiced in waiting. She stood in a corner, looking at an unopened pack of Pall Malls on a gray table. My jacket was inside out, thrown across the back of one of two chairs.

"Carter, Lilian," Holman said. "Twenty-eight. Bozeman, Montana. Lot of small time here. Been running since she was nineteen from one thing or another." He tapped a pen on the clipboard.

Northeast. She was going home.

"Get her to model that jacket for you." Holman stepped out.

Lilian Carter stiffened as the door opened and Holman appeared. He spoke to her. When she didn't move, I could see him say *Come on, Lily*. She took the jacket from the back of the chair and pushed the big sleeves right side out as she put it on. Holman twirled a finger and she turned around. HURRICANE. She stepped up and faced the mirror, took a comb from inside the jacket and picked her thumb down the teeth, then in even strokes ran it through her hair—it was her way to be angry. She looked calm but she worked the comb hard, and when it snagged her mouth tightened a little. Her eyes were gray and quick to follow Holman when he moved behind her.

She tapped on the mirror with the comb. My neck got hot and sweat came to my palms. She watched the mirror, daring me. I pulled my key ring from my pocket and ticked the key to the Courier against the glass. She smiled, and then her mouth hardened when Holman spoke to her. She sat and he left, taking the unopened pack of cigarettes with him.

"Well?" Holman said, back in the room. He tossed the cigarettes in a small gray trash can. "Give me something and I'll hold her. Stealing cigarettes ain't worth it."

On a frozen road somewhere, snow blowing, I saw Lilian Carter lighting another Pall Mall, the jacket pulled tight around her. My life of small failure had led me here, to finger someone caught trying to go home.

"It's not mine," I said.

"What?" There was contempt in Holman's voice.

"That's not my jacket," I told him again.

"Jesus," Holman said.

OUTSIDE THE STORM HAD LET UP SOME. THE rain was windblown, cold, scattering in bursts across the black streets. Tired, I circled back through town a couple of times and found an open diner near the freeway on-ramp. I was still playing with the idea of heading south, but it was make-believe now, just part of a story I was telling myself. I parked away from the diner's entrance, near a streetlight, so it would be easier to see the ignition wires when I left.

The diner was a cinder-block building with a beam ceiling laced with cobwebs. By the door was a topographic map showing the lava paths from Shasta, and above the cash register a small chalkboard listed a turkey dinner for six dollars. The place was nearly empty, all the lights over the booths turned off, so I took a seat down the counter from a truck driver. I didn't have anything new to say to Beth, but I wanted to reassure her and hear her voice again. I got a cup of coffee and the waitress gave me quarters for two dollars and told me the phone was by the rest rooms. I didn't want to call collect.

The line was slow and took all my change. While I

waited for the ring Lilian Carter came out of the women's room, punched a button on the cigarette machine and walked past me into the restaurant. I hung up and my money rattled into the coin return. She walked down the counter, past my coffee, and sat next to the truck driver. She smiled and he started talking, gesturing with big hands. I took my money from the phone and sat back down at the counter.

"This weather's nothing," he said, shaking his head. He took a pack of Marlboros out of his coat and held the cigarettes out. "Diane, right?"

Lilian Carter nodded, took a cigarette and lit it quickly with the truck driver's lighter.

"I got to make a call." The truck driver pushed himself away from the counter and went for the phone.

She drew hard on the cigarette, flicked the ash on the floor, then slid his coffee cup in front of her and took a french fry off his finished plate.

I rattled the change in my pocket. Enough for cigarettes—Pall Malls. At the phone the truck driver dialed. I went past him and dropped my quarters into the machine.

"Hey, it's me," the truck driver said. He put a finger to his free ear. "I don't know, maybe not tonight. This damned weather—"

Lilian Carter was fingering another cigarette from the pack on the counter when I took my seat again. I set the Pall Malls in front of me and sipped my coffee. She moved over, taking the seat two down from me.

"You got a spare cigarette?" she asked me. "I can't stand these." She broke the Marlboro in half. The leather of the jacket creaked when she moved.

"Go ahead," I said, and slid the cigarettes toward her.

She opened the pack, lit one and picked a grain of tobacco from her lip, then exhaled a long stream of smoke across the counter.

"Thanks," she said. "Which way you going?"

"East." I put more cream in my coffee and stirred it, spilling a little. I didn't want to look at her. I was ashamed for hearing the truck driver on the phone, for baiting her with cigarettes I would never have bought on my own, for telling her east instead of the truth.

She reached and took the spoon from my hand. "You okay?"

"Me?" I said.

"Yeah. You nervous?"

The cook erased the Thanksgiving special from the chalkboard and took his apron off.

"I'm all right. I'm fine."

Lilian Carter laughed a little. "Nobody here is fine." She licked the spoon and set it on the counter. "Too bad you're not going south."

"South?" I said.

She looked at me. "Yeah. Sacramento."

"Why?"

"Somebody there owes me money." She pointed over her shoulder. "Romeo here's going to San Diego."

The truck driver was off the phone, walking behind us to his seat. "Uh-oh," he said. "Uh-oh."

"Relax," she told him. "He's going east."

The waitress came and took the truck driver's plate away.

"Can I—?" Lilian Carter pointed at the pack of Pall Malls.

"Be my guest," I said.

She took four cigarettes. "You got a home?"

She caught me off guard and I felt insulted, as if she should've showed me some gratitude, some respect; but then all she knew about me was the cigarettes she had in her hand. I shifted in my seat. "A wife—" I said. "And a little girl, Gina, six—"

The words were too simple and they brought my eyes down to the counter. But it was my story, still. "We live in a two-story house I built. All redwood frame." I looked up at her and smiled.

"Good thing on a night like this." She smiled back.

"I got a house with eighteen wheels," the truck driver said.

Lilian Carter rolled her eyes. "Take care of yourself," she told me, and moved back to her stool.

I paid and left the cigarettes on the counter. In the parking lot gusts of wind blew rain across the streetlights. I stood under the café's eaves, looking at the Courier and breathing the cold air. I was wishing I hadn't stopped, that I had headed back right away. I wanted to tell Beth about the Chee-tos bag, the cigarettes, the wide-open way it all made me feel. But it was another Beth I wanted, the one I'd known at Lilian Carter's age, the one who would've sat up with me all night making up stories about the thieves. The one I could've said I'm happy to and meant it.

Lilian stepped out while I was leaning against the Courier, going through my pockets for the tape. She stood against the building, working the pack of Pall Malls against her palm. She stopped when she saw me next to my truck. She lit a cigarette, I straightened up, and we watched each other. I waited for something to say, something to tell her, but I was too far away and the rain was coming down hard. I needed to hit on something, still. Something I could tell myself.

In the distance traffic moved on I-5, the sound reaching through the wind in pieces.

My fingers curled around the roll of tape in my pocket. "I lied," I said into the rain. □

OCTOBER 12

BY GUY BILLOUT



*What are the essential ingredients of a biography or an autobiography?
That question has no doubt crossed the mind of any reader who has put down such a
book with satisfied delight or bitter disappointment. The author, who is The Atlantic's poetry
editor, is also a book editor, and in this essay, drawn from long experience,
he reflects on the art of telling someone's story*

TO EDIT A LIFE

BY PETER DAVISON

FOR FORTY YEARS, AT THE RATE OF ABOUT ONE a year, I have been editing biographies and autobiographies, large and small, light and heavy, but usually reputable. The biographies range in subject matter from Enrico Caruso (my first) and Katharine Cornell to Anne Sexton, from Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes and Ezra Pound to Adam Clayton Powell Jr. (my current project); and the autobiographies from Farley Mowat's numerous books about his adventures to Louis Kronenberger's elegant memoirs, titled *No Whippings, No Gold Watches*, and the adoring rhapsody, *Discretions*, of Ezra Pound's daughter, Mary de Rachewiltz. I even wrote, in 1972, my own autobiography, titled *Half Remembered*, and then, nearly twenty years later, revised and enlarged the book for paperback, although I still could not remember the other half.

In the years since I wrote that book, the arts of biography and autobiography have altered profoundly, for reasons not only social and literary but also economic, psychological, and legal. As biography became at least apparently more lucrative, journalists turned their attention to writing the lives of the great, and publishers encouraged them with larger and larger advances. The devices of investigative reporting and tabloid journalism became valuable tools for the biographer who wanted his or her book underwritten before starting to write. Meanwhile, public figures during these past few decades have lost the means to protect themselves as a result of such landmark libel cases as *New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964). Literary estates and living artists have been handed a weapon to protect access to people's lives by making it possible to enjoin a biographer's use, in any form, of the subject's unpublished writings (*Random House v. Salinger* [1987]). These forces have combined to affect biography for the worse, fostering, even in seriously intended works, the growth of what Joyce Carol Oates once labeled "pathography"—the investigation of a subject's failings, sins, illnesses, and vices.

I happen to have no experience in editing "celebrity" biographies, like the fourteen extant "lives" of Marilyn Monroe, or in editing that particular breed of book which is now baldly labeled, in a sort of relay race with the libel

lawyers, "unauthorized"—as if to suggest to the public that it contains everything the celebrity would have given his or her eyeteeth for you not to find out. It's a dangerous game, requiring chutzpah in the highest and ill will toward its subject. But books like this are proliferating far more rapidly than serious biographies, which require the author's time, attention, scholarship, and fidelity to the truth or what can be discovered of the truth.

THE FRENCH CRITIC ROLAND BARTHES ONCE called biography "a novel that dare not speak its name." The same applies even more keenly to autobiography, since memoirs (like most first novels) have a tendency to paint self-portraits in those colors the author deems most flattering, whether or not they fall into the truly self-revelatory category shared by the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine and of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Most autobiographies treat the self as an example, or as a victim, or as a source of wisdom, or as the butt of humor. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, written not exclusively by Malcolm X but also by Alex Haley, erected an idol. The living autobiographer, after all, still has to look the living reader in the eye; and his or her editor, first and foremost, must determine what attitude the author intends to take toward the tale.

The editor is responsible for understanding the person and the story well enough to help the author choose a posture. But what if the editor doesn't yet know the story, and has to drag the mere truth out of some notable who is swollen with self-importance? It's even harder when the editor does not know the author—though the author's reputation will probably have preceded him, like General Norman Schwarzkopf's, or the book would not have exerted sufficient public appeal for the publisher to have commissioned it in the first place. (We need not dwell on what is these days the unusual instance of a notable person who actually writes his memoirs and then seeks a publisher: in the era of competitive publishing corporations and the literary agent, it happens the other way around.) I have worked with autobiographers who want to tell too much about themselves, but more often I encounter those who do not want to tell enough, who

cannot imagine presenting themselves in a bad light—or in what the author's adoring, or divorced, spouse (the spouse holds the hole card in every autobiography) regards as his or her bad light.

The editor's approach to the autobiographer has to involve a certain amount of parental tenderness, even though parental strictness may also be called for to keep the memoir believable. Nobody wants to reveal everything about himself except the randiest exhibitionists, some of whom do in fact write great autobiographies—as did Henry Miller, whose books are for some reason called novels. A worse problem still is revealing everything about somebody else, which is the bane of the editor's—and the author's—lawyers.

Should the autobiographer, like the White Rabbit, plan to begin at the beginning, go on till he comes to the end, and then stop? Usually not: the exit from the womb, except in cases like Julius Caesar's, takes pretty much the same course for all of us, lies beyond the author's memory, and is of principal interest only to obstetricians. If the autobiographer can settle on a later, essentially formative scene, or on an episode, in childhood or adulthood, that somehow opens the door to the style and tilt of the whole book, the story stands a good chance of telling itself from start to finish in such a way as to cast revealing angles of light over its events. Agnes de Mille, who has written half a dozen volumes of memoirs and, in her eighties, a notable biography of Martha Graham, never began at the beginning in any of her books. Her first, *Dance to the Piper*, begins with her discovery, at ten, of Hollywood, where she moved when her father gave up directing plays and undertook the direction of movies. This was well before it was revealed to her that she was a dancer, a gift that she exploited relatively late in life but that colored everything that came before and after. Justin Kaplan's masterly biography of Mark Twain begins when his subject is thirty-one, because "the central drama of his mature literary life was his discovery of the usable past."

Bertrand Russell, Victorian to the core, did begin at the beginning ("My first vivid recollection is my arrival at

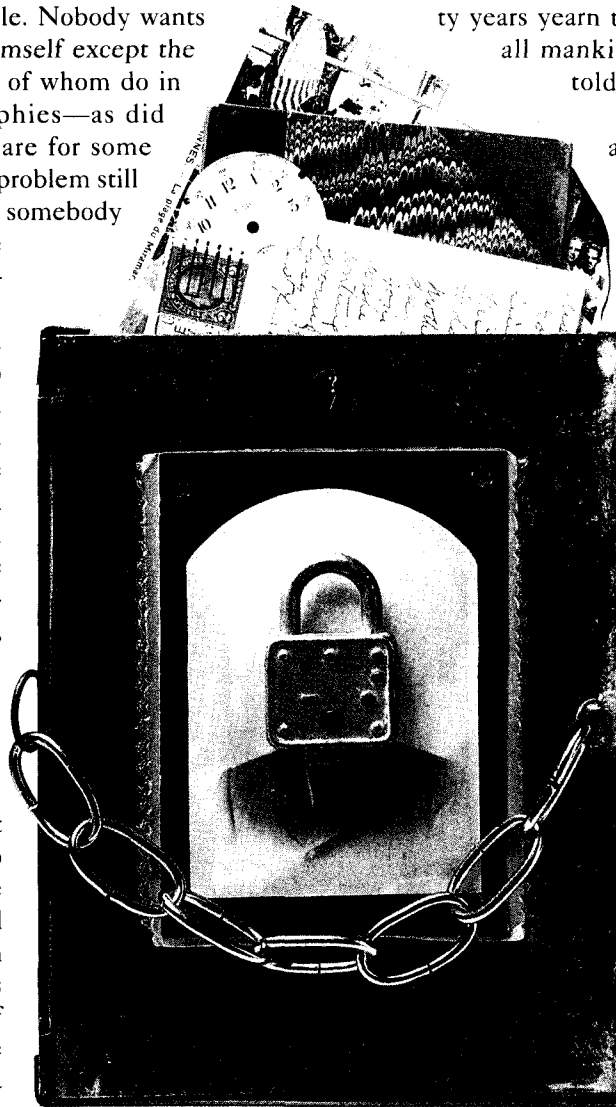
Pembroke Lodge in February 1876"), identifying his lordly grandparents (his grandfather was a Prime Minister) before arriving at his unfortunate and sickly parents, who died in sequence, leaving the grandparents to rear the two wards in Chancery, Bertie and his older brother, Frank, in high palatial splendor. Being set apart from other children would make Russell for more than ninety years yearn to sympathize with others—with all mankind! Few people, his childhood

told him, would sympathize with a lonely and precocious orphan on a grand estate, but the boy early and often found ways of consoling himself with philosophy, protecting his tender feelings with his brilliant intelligence, and attracting constant attention by expressing opinions on everything.

Autobiography depends not only on the nature of the subject but also on the audience imagined for it, to which the editor must be sensitive indeed. Those who read the magnificent memoirs of George F. Kennan knew him beforehand as a behind-the-scenes adviser on foreign relations, whose influential articulation of the "containment" policy was written anonymously. But Kennan also had a personal story to tell. Accordingly, he began, very tentatively, with his happy childhood in the Midwest, in a dream country that, as a life-long diplomat, he would never return to: "There are, of course, great variations in people's capacity to remember

consciously their early youth. My own, I fear, falls at the weaker end of the spectrum." When he returned to his native land after decades of foreign service, the rural simplicities of Wisconsin had long since forsaken him. Kennan's *Memoirs* beneath their surface croon a lament for an imagined innocent America, while advocating an informed realism in foreign affairs. It's not strange that his sympathy with contemporary America is limited and often expressed with pursed lips.

Autobiography, like any true art, requires a most particular attention to tone: what tone does the author take toward himself? Kennan is nostalgic, Russell is witty. Mary de Rachewiltz, the daughter of Ezra Pound and Olga Rudge, begins by exulting in the peasant upbringing



ing that her foster parents provided in the Tyrolean uplands for years before she even knew who her true parents were—a theme that would never leave her alone. Throughout her adored father's stormy career she would keep hoping that she could create once more that alpine simplicity, and somehow include him in it—the last thing he wanted for himself, which was the last thing she discovered about him. The editor's task was to encourage her to play up her adoration and play down his anti-Semitism: not everyone who knew Ezra Pound found him so adorable.

Autobiographies have a lot of trouble ending themselves, because the hero or heroine by definition is still alive as the final words are written. The choices are all unsatisfactory. Leave 'em laughing is one of the best—and most infrequent. Marry (usually for the second or third time) and live happily ever after is a very frequent and unconvincing terminus. To conclude with the death of a loved one—spouse, parent, or child—can be deeply touching, but it cannot help raising the question of the author's motive in telling us all this. The editor may well be able to suggest something remarkable. Frank Conroy's *Stop-time* ends with one of the unforgettable flourishes of contemporary autobiography, as Conroy's car skids, at fifty miles an hour, sideways across an English town square: "But the front wheel caught a low curb and the car spun around the fountain like a baton around a cheerleader's wrist. . . . The side of the car bumped very gently against the fountain, inches away from my face. Then, with a slight lurch, everything stopped. . . ."

TURNING TO BIOGRAPHY, I DISTINGUISH BETWEEN two entirely different problems: the life of the safely dead, and the life of the recently dead. The first kind of book depends for its existence on the discovery of papers and sources, and the second usually depends on the good will of living people: widows or widowers or literary executors. The two varieties require different approaches, and different kinds of help from an editor.

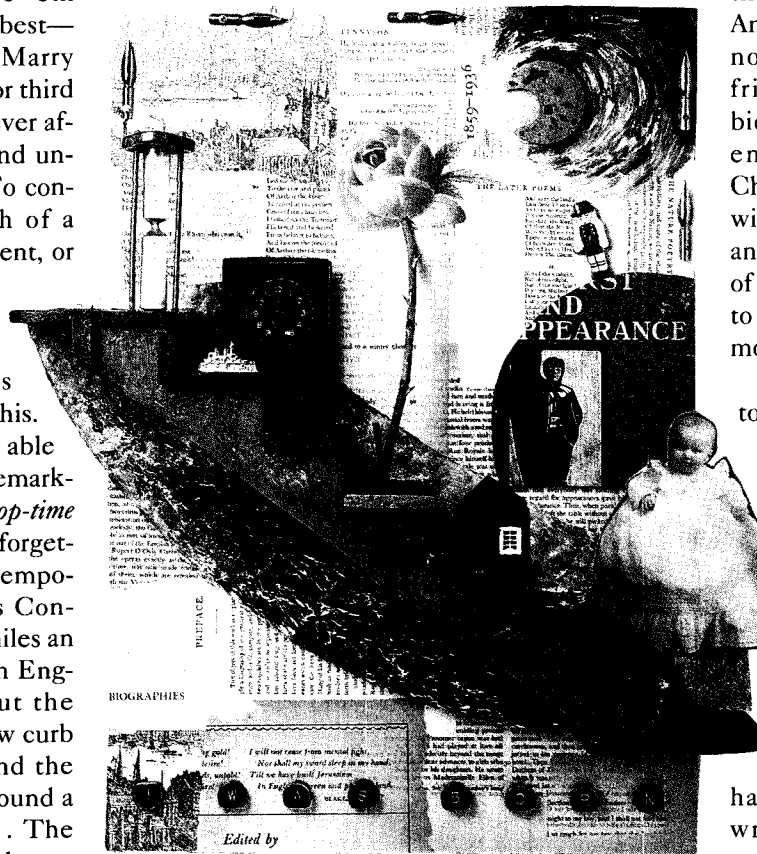
In either category the first thing an editor should do is to make absolutely certain that the writer has the deepest possible admiration for and identification with the sub-

ject. Why? Because the chances are that the biographer will have to live with this subject for at least five and sometimes more than ten years, and will discover things he or she never imagined possible. The biographer of Thomas Hardy discovered that the young Hardy was sexually excited by the sight and sound of the hangings of criminals and later enthusiastically mourned his dead wife (very publicly and beautifully) in a long sequence of poems that did his second marriage no good, even though the first couple had not in fact got on at all well. George Orwell's biographers have learned that, despite his deep sympathy for the lower classes of mankind, Orwell was in person a surly and unpleasant friend. The biographer of Josephine Herbst revealed to the world—and to

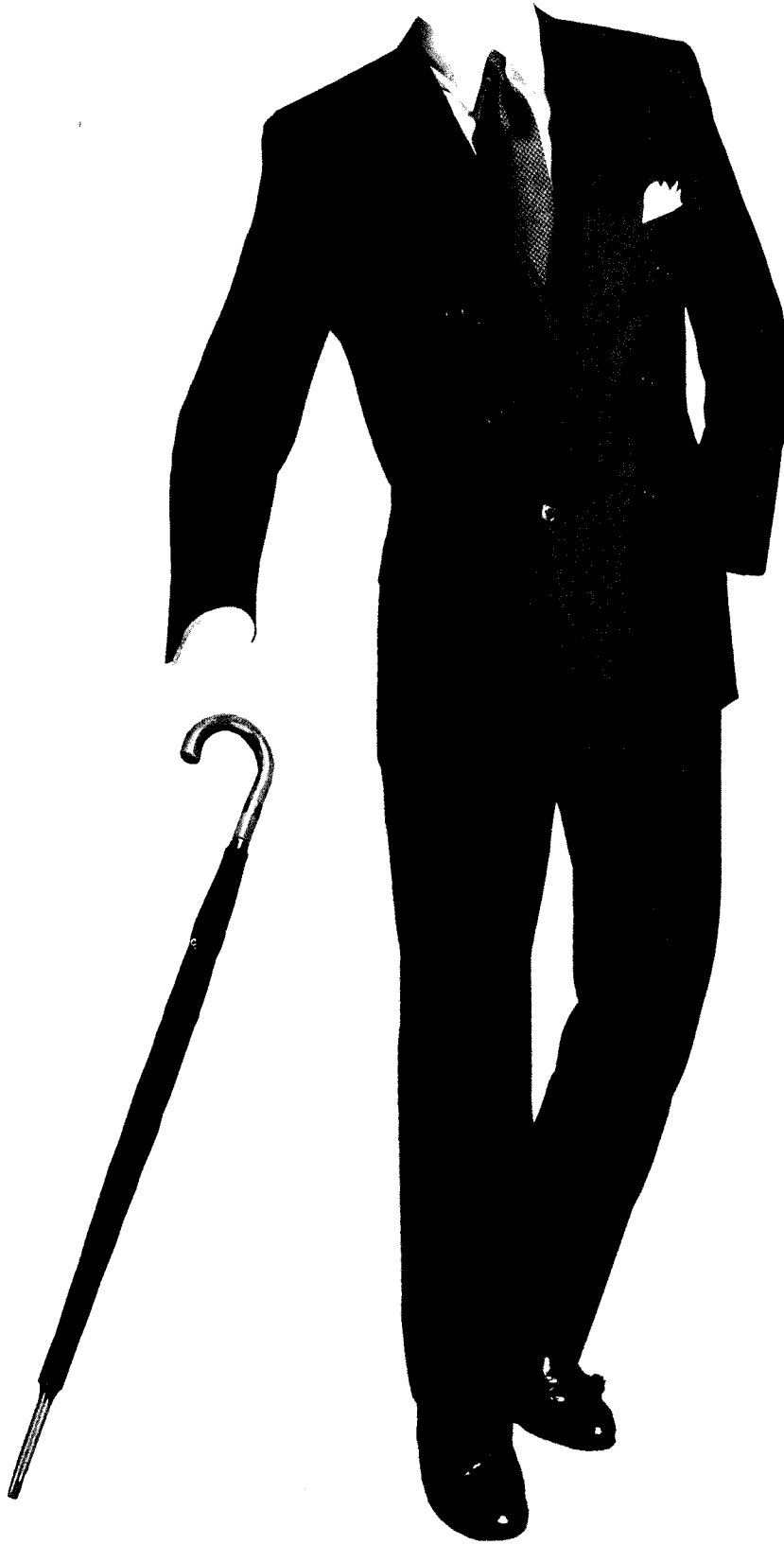
the biographer of Katherine Anne Porter—that Porter denounced Josie, her closest friend, to the FBI. Of the biographical subjects I have encountered, only Anton Chekhov seems to have been without serious fault or flaw; and though he was the easiest of all subjects for a biographer to live with, he was one of the most difficult to understand.

If the biographer chooses to dwell on a subject's shortcomings, it may take twice as long as expected to write the book, because it is difficult for an author to write with sympathy about someone whose actions he or she detests. The classic case is Mark Schorer's *Sinclair Lewis*. No woman, and certainly not his widow, has yet, to my knowledge, written objectively about randy, lewd, drunken, self-

destructive Dylan Thomas, though in his life protective women flocked to his bed. But Thomas died young, barely thirty-nine. A man who lives to ninety will unavoidably have left a long, long paper trail awinding, a trail it may take many years to follow. Will author, will editor, survive till the end arrives? Scott Donaldson, the experienced and professional biographer of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Cheever, and Winfield Townley Scott, found that his scrupulously calculated deadlines went glimmering when he tackled the very long, presumably successful, and highly eventful life of Archibald MacLeish. Despite Donaldson's original intentions and a body of research already gathered for him by Roy Winnick, the book outgrew several editors as well as Donaldson's expectations



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for it. The editor's task is to know, and to persuade the author, when enough is enough. Sometimes the text may be shortened; sometimes it will do to shorten the apparatus—the bibliography or the notes.

A cautionary question regarding the safely dead is Where are the papers? Who controls them? May they be quoted from? This can supersede any question of the passage of time: the Boswell papers, after all, did not turn up until a hundred and fifty years after his death—they were on the precincts of Malahide Castle, in Ireland, where no one would have expected them to surface.

Another form of assistance the editor can provide such a biography is to encourage the re-evaluation of the protagonist in terms valid in contemporary life. Carolyn Heilbrun, in her cogent and discerning book *Writing a Woman's Life*, raises a number of challenging questions about the way biographers, male and female, write the lives of women. Because so many biographers these days are discovering the unwritten lives of women, Heilbrun's ideas are worth testing for any biography that contains women, in whatever role.

THE SECOND VARIETY OF BIOGRAPHY IS SURELY the more difficult: the life of the recently dead, evidence of whom resides in the cupboards and diaries and heads of the still living, who tend to have a particular interest in seeing that the life of the beloved (or detested) is written "accurately." No biographer needs more tact than one whose subject died young, mourned by some and unmourned by others, and whose papers reside, copyrighted, in the charge of a suspicious executor. The most striking recent example of this is Sylvia Plath, who committed suicide at thirty, leaving her literary effects to the care of her estranged husband, Ted Hughes, who in turn named his sister agent for her estate. As a result, every would-be biographer since Plath's death, in 1963 (I can count at least nine, only five of whom actually published their books), has had either to clear permission from the Plath estate for every line of poetry quoted (in which case the estate required the biographer to submit the text of the book for inspection) or to refrain from quoting the very poetry that made Plath famous. The process of approving the text was complicated by the estate's desire to defend itself, collectively and individually, against defamation or invasions of privacy, of which more below. Biographers of T. S. Eliot have had similar problems, though in this instance the cost of the permissions has been more fiscal than censorial.

I was a friend of Sylvia Plath's and am still, I hope, a friend of her husband's, and I had been interviewed by nearly everyone who wanted to write about her life, but it was not until twenty-four years after her death that Olwyn Hughes, Ted's sister, approached me to bring out the American edition of a biography of Plath by Anne Stevenson, an Anglo-American poet and critic whose work I much admired. Stevenson created version after

version in order to fulfill the estate's requirements for correctness (and self-defense), and eventually reached an impasse. Finally, at the urging of all parties, the manuscript was remanded to me to adapt a text coherent with the author's views and style which would also pass the strict construction of the estate. It was the most harrowing editorial task I have ever undertaken, because the estate had the legal right to prohibit quotation and Stevenson had the moral right to speak her mind. The editorial process lasted nearly two years after the book's first draft was done. Essential to the endless negotiations was the advice of a talented publishing attorney. Happily, *Bitter Fame: A Life of Sylvia Plath*, finished to the relative satisfaction of both sides, is still, to most of us who knew her, the most penetrating and eloquent life of a woman who was, at her reckless heart, a superb poet, even as she attempted in her daily life to be everything else as well—novelist, mother, journalist, housewife, cook, intellectual, *amoureuse*, beekeeper, everything but the feminist that many of her posthumous admirers imagined her to have been.

As an example of a different solution to a similar problem, take *Anne Sexton: A Biography*, by Diane Middlebrook. This biography, of another suicidal poet, seemed to take as long as Penelope's web from its commission to its publication, and ran through four Houghton Mifflin editors before it saw print. Jonathan Galassi, with Anne Sexton's elder daughter—who was also her literary executor—found Middlebrook, a professor at Stanford University, and offered her a modest contract to write the book; with the assistance of foundation grants and private funds, Middlebrook wove her fabric of interviews, research, and documentation for more than five years. Only then did Sexton's primary psychiatrist, Dr. Martin Orne, come forward and agree to cooperate with the biographer. As a consequence, Middlebrook learned of the existence of audiotapes of some three hundred hours of psychiatric interviews. Although she had by this time already drafted much of her text, she asked the literary executor whether she might hear and use the material in this most private of documents. With the estate's concurrence, she set aside her keyboard and spent most of a year listening to and annotating the interviews; then she rewrote her book with the sound of the analysand's voice in her ears, discovering as she advanced how closely Anne Sexton's poetry was related to the psychiatric process.

By this time I had become the fourth (and final) editor of the book. The first editor helped find the right author for the book; the second contributed patience and moral support; the third guided the author through the complex of libel, invasion of privacy, and defamation which hedged the life of a woman who had loved many men, who had persisted in a most unorthodox marriage, who had given much love to many friends, and who had sacrificed a lacerated life for a career that for a time preserved her tottering sanity. My job, with the counsel of the same

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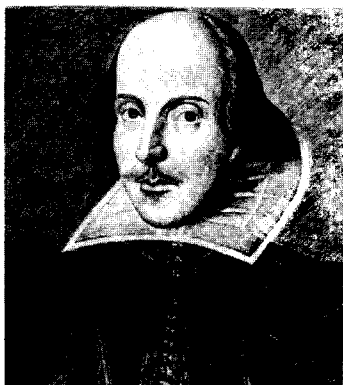
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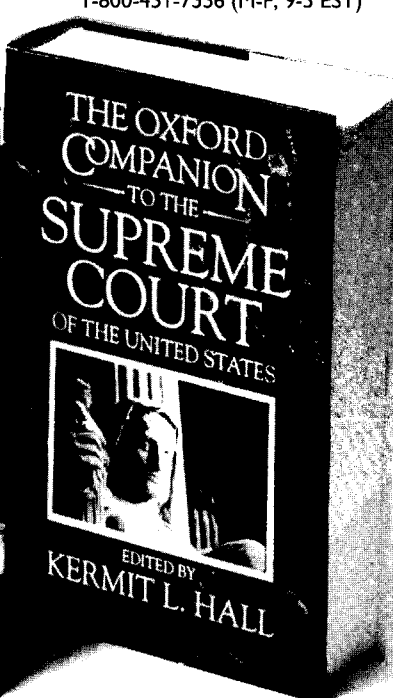
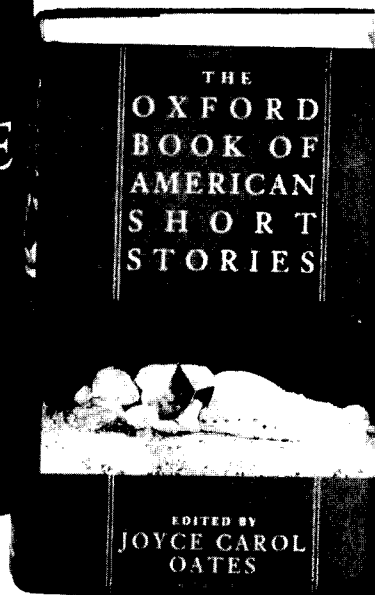
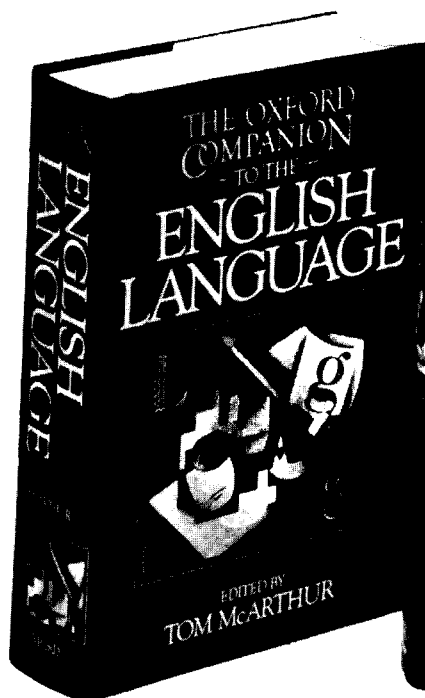
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attorney who had so admirably helped with *Bitter Fame*, and with the scrupulous cooperation and support of Anne Sexton's daughter and her lawyer husband, was to advise Diane Middlebrook on the creation of the final text.

Every word of narrative was Diane Middlebrook's own, but it had to avoid giving offense to family and friends while telling the searing truth. The direct quotations from Sexton's letters and poetry—and from letters to her from friends and lovers—had to be cleared with husband, children, every friend, every lover, every colleague. The scrupulousness and professionalism with which Middlebrook carried out her biographical duties were staggering. My principal contribution, aside from line-by-line examination of her splendid text, and advice on how to keep the length of the book within tolerable limits, was, from my personal knowledge of Sexton's surroundings, to steer Middlebrook to certain acquaintances of Sexton's who might have more to tell or who might grant permission if approached this way rather than that.

After three years on the editorial job I was proud to see Middlebrook's work at an end—only to find, to my astonishment, that *Publishers Weekly* had solicited the opinion of an expert on the ethics of psychiatry, who, without reading a word of the book, condemned the biographer's use of the psychiatric tapes. The next thing we knew, we had a controversy on our hands, with articles in the London papers, on the front page of *The New York Times*, and throughout the press—all this months before the biography actually saw publication. We had expected exclamations over Anne Sexton's life, and even over her psychiatric history (a second psychiatrist had in fact conducted a two-year affair with his patient, writing love poems to her as he collected his professional fees); but the psychiatric profession preferred to avoid mention of this peccadillo. Thanks to wonderful reviews and a brilliant publicity campaign orchestrated by the publisher and doughtily performed by the author, *Anne Sexton* was a best seller—and it was a prizewinner as well.

In short, the biography of the literary lately dead presents challenges that do not apply to subjects who have been off the scene long enough for their printed works to be out of copyright. The law still requires the approval of

the estate of a dead person to quote unpublished letters and other documents written by the protagonist, unless they are the public papers of a public person. Even now the courts, in the wake of the famous case in which J. D. Salinger prevented Ian Hamilton from quoting from his letters, or even paraphrasing them in a biography, are still wrangling over this subject. The editor of biographies has work to do in keeping up with the case law on the subject—or in keeping up with an attorney who knows it.

For this reason the editor of biographies needs to pay especial attention to the dreary particulars of permissions to quote, releases from persons depicted, and rights to reproduce the best photographs. In such wastelands as these the vulture of libel is always hovering overhead.

Yes, the publisher's contract sets responsibility for clearance on the shoulders of the author, but today the publisher is asked to insure the author against damages, and so has to bear much of the load. An experienced editor, who has been involved with more biographies than most biographers, must lend a hand to make sure that the particulars are taken care of. The life of biography is in the details.



IF THERE WERE A PERFECT biographer, he or she would be the following: a real writer, one who understands how to construct and recount a labile and sensuous narrative; a master of research, in both documents and interviews; a person who is tactful in dealings with relatives, librarians, lovers, executors, children, parents, and editors; one who is so

cannily devoted to the personality of the biographical subject as to pursue every true lead and abandon every false one; one who cares so deeply about the precision of the text as to check every fact again and again, every document, every photograph, every rumor. But, beyond the conscientious practice of these skills, the biographer's genius lies in having the sympathy and imagination to create the story of a life about which the subject's ghost would say, "That's as close to me as anybody else could be expected to get." The biographer's worst temptation is to transform the subject into someone preferable to the original.

Anne Stevenson, as she wrote her life of Sylvia Plath, grew in understanding of her subject and sympathized

with Plath more deeply at the end than at the outset—perhaps more deeply than some of Plath’s own family did. Diane Middlebrook learned more about her subject than she had ever dreamed possible, and came to admire the way in which Sexton shored her poetry against the ruins of her life. Ronald Steel, in writing his biography of Walter Lippmann (“Walter Lippmann,” he began, “was brought up to be a gentleman”), began to find himself losing accord with Lippmann’s temperament, with Lippmann’s attitude toward his own and other people’s Judaism, and with other aspects of Lippmann’s life. Steel’s editor was the late, great Edward Weeks, who had himself been a close friend of Lippmann’s and had edited many of Lippmann’s books. Steel, after some years, cast about, seeking perhaps to find a newer, younger editor under the publisher’s roof who would show more sympathy to him and less to Lippmann, but none came forward, and time passed until the book had exceeded its delivery date by a decade. Weeks exercised the most potent weapon an editor can possess: patience. The sales department grew restive. Lippmann was by this time long dead, though he had been alive and even vigorous when the task was begun, and some people could not imagine who would any longer be interested in reading his life. The editorial moral here is Don’t always listen too carefully to the lamentations of sales departments, for as it turned out, every first-class reviewer in America chose to give close and admiring attention to *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* when it was published, in 1980. It sold fifty thousand copies and won the Bancroft Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award.

Ronald Steel’s struggle with his subject ended in a publishing success, as did Diane Middlebrook’s. The story of Anne Stevenson and Sylvia Plath does not have quite so happy an ending. Stevenson’s life of Plath (1989) did not make its entrance until after two prior books, one deeply inaccurate (Edward Butscher’s, 1976) and the other simply obtuse (Linda Wagner-Martin’s, 1987), had appeared and Plath, for very peculiar reasons, had been elevated posthumously into an illusory martyrdom of the feminist movement. Stevenson’s book was laboriously

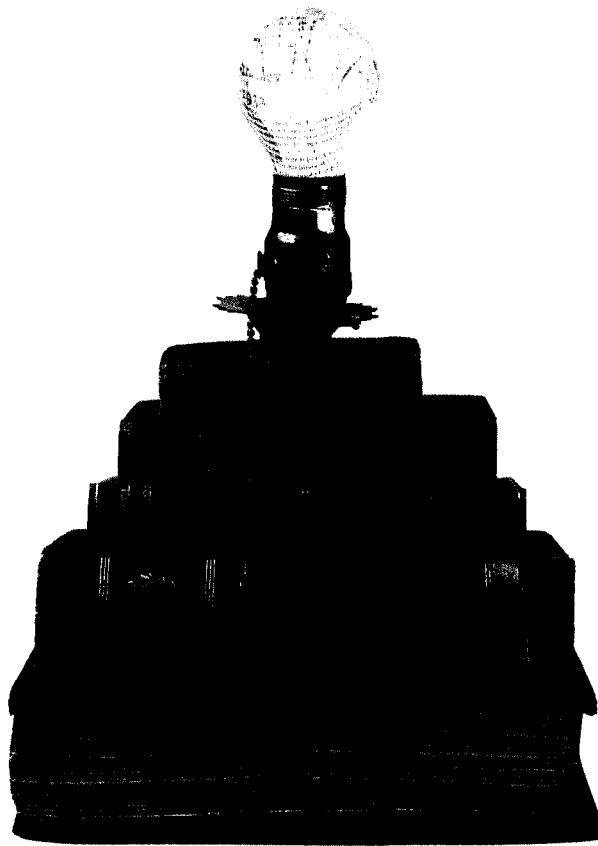
faithful to the known facts and the poetry alike. Yet, because of the estate’s obvious influence on the book, it was attacked, misinterpreted, and harangued in England by ideologues or self-interested critics, and was relatively ignored by the American public. *Walter Lippmann* and *Anne Sexton* became best sellers; *Bitter Fame* did not.

It is important for the sake of truth and history to have produced the best biography of your subject, but it can be more lucrative to be first on the scene. John Malcolm Brinnin’s agonized and agonizing personal memoir, *Dylan Thomas in America* (1955), the first portrait, has outstripped in popularity the half-dozen full-scale biographies of Thomas published since. Brinnin’s book was also

made into a play that has showered both the author and the estate with royalties. If you hope to create a legend, try to do it quickly.

Most lamentable of all is the case of Robert Frost, who had the misfortune to choose his own biographer, a Princeton librarian named Lawrance Thompson, and to live for twenty-four years beyond the appointment, by which time Thompson not only had gathered up all the materials for a three-volume biography (which even Thompson did not live to finish unaided; he enlisted his former student Roy Winnick) but also had developed an attitude toward his subject that may prove as incurably poisonous to Frost’s reputation as Rufus Griswold’s disapproving life of Edgar Allan Poe was to Poe’s. No major American figure more desperately needs a rehabilitative biography than Robert Frost, and none is less

likely to get his deserts until a new generation of disinterested executors takes charge. The “friends of Marse Robert,” as Allen Tate once called them, gathered around the poet’s posthumous reputation like the Achaeans surrounding the body of Patroclus, in their attempt to preserve the conventional image of the hayseed sage. The only American poet ever to read at a presidential inauguration, a poet who produced a body of the wittiest, most beautiful, and most heartbreaking poetry in our literary history, is the one least likely to receive an adequate biography. He lived too long, authorized his own biographer—the wrong one—too early, and for whatever reason earned that biographer’s secret enmity. For this fate no editor has a remedy. □





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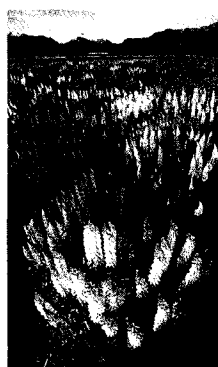
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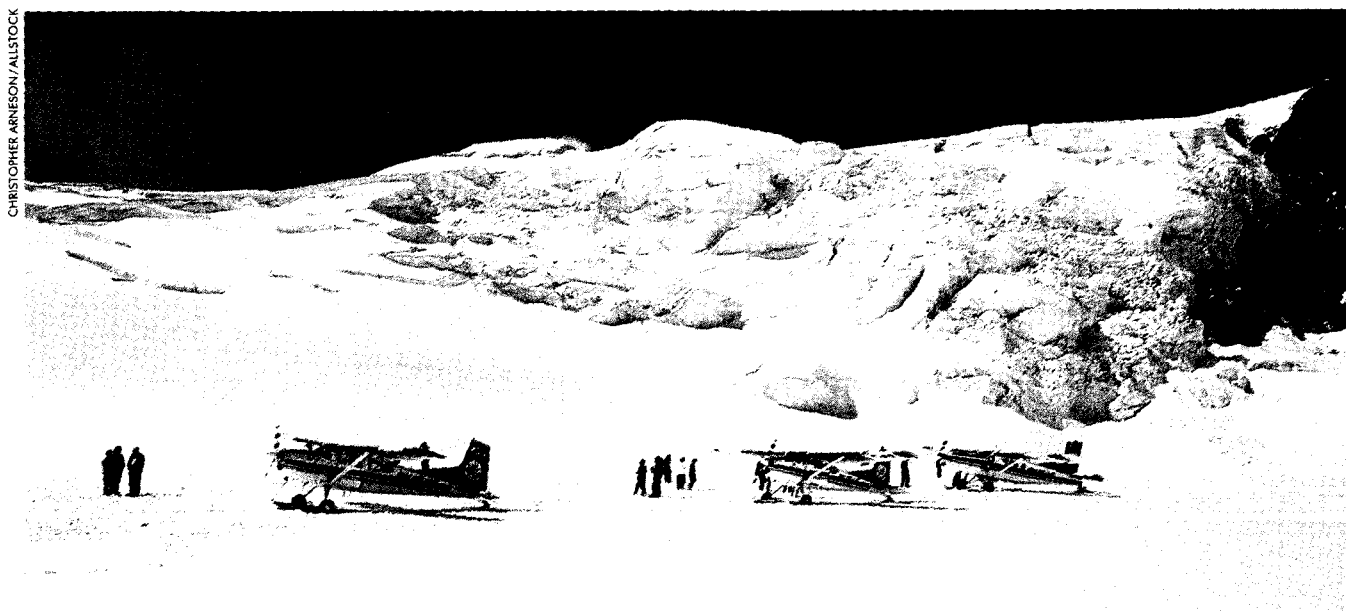
by Barbara Wallraff

NEW ZEALAND had been reminding me of something, but I couldn't think what until late one afternoon about a week into a trip there early this year, when my husband and I were walking a trail beneath the tallest and most famous mountain in the country, Mount Cook. The trail first meanders through a wildflower-filled meadow toward the jagged, glacial sweep of Mount Sefton and then veers off to the right, over a fast stream and into a rocky gray wasteland beyond which, as dramatically symmetrical as Fujiyama, Mount Cook looms. The wasteland is impressive but forbidding, and we began talking about turning back. The trail is an out-and-back one, not a loop, and so the farther we walked, the closer we came to missing our dinner reservations. Suddenly around a bend appeared an elderly couple, he in an Australian bush hat, a pullover, and shorts, she in running shoes and a floral sundress sparkly with a gold-metallic overprint. They began to chat with us, the woman reporting drolly that they, New Zealanders, had shot all their film before learning from a party of Japanese that what they had been focusing on

was Mount Sefton, not Mount Cook. The couple also extolled the beauties of the lake at the end of the trail. It was full of icebergs, they said—absolutely remarkable, and only forty-five easy minutes farther.

We continued on to the lake, which was as described. We did have to hurry back so as not to be late for dinner, and we were glad we weren't. The meal, in the Panorama Room of The Hermitage, our hotel, was as rare a treat, in its way, as our few minutes of lolling on the shore of the iceberg-strewn lake. The tables were arranged as if the room were a dinner theater starring, beyond the picture windows, Mount Sefton. While daylight faded on its slopes, we dined on salmon timbale stuffed with native mussels and scallops, alpine antelope (locally a pest species, according to our waiter) in juniper sauce with spaetzle, and, finally, boysenberries the size of wine corks, capped with whipped cream. New Zealanders brag about their domestic white wines and disparage their reds, and because we had yet to find a reason to hold any contrary opinion, we ordered and happily drank a bottle of fumé blanc. Before the meal was out,

At left: Dusky Sound, south of Milford Sound. Above: South Island lupine



Above: snow landings on the Tasman Glacier, in Mount Cook National Park. Below: the Milford Track's Sutherland Falls

though, the people at the next table struck up a conversation and offered us a glass of their "pinotage," a blend of cabernet sauvignon and pinot noir, and at last we had a reason. From then on, whenever we had game—ranchered venison more often than antelope (the countryside is dotted with deer pastures)—we ordered pinotage.

But what had New Zealand been reminding me of? The jolly couple on the trail brought it into focus: J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth, and C. S. Lewis's Narnia, and fantasy-adventure lands like that. Not that I've read any books set in such places since adolescence. I'm worse than vague on their plots. But I remember keenly the sense of expansive, innocent adventure, the wonderment at the scenery, the wholesome if sometimes eccentric bonhomie, and the toothsome feasts laid in wayfarers' lodges and beside campfires. This spirit New Zealand captures perfectly.

Traveling in New Zealand is an adventure not because evil Gollums are lurking around the bend—there aren't even any snakes—but because of the sheer variety of pleasures one has to choose from. There are lovely vistas of all types, everywhere: chlorophyll-choked rain forests, and saw-toothed mountain ranges reflected in pristine lakes, and waterfalls you can't see the top of, and majestic sweeping plains, and cozy bays stippled with islands. There are gee-whiz natural attractions, like ocean blowholes, geysers, and

glaciers. There are wildlife attractions, like glowworm caves and seal and penguin colonies. And there are gee-whiz manmade attractions: say, a fiber-glass salmon forty or so feet high, erected to promote a small town's annual fishing festival, or lurid gardens in front of middle-class homes—row after row of eye-popping red, orange, pink, and gold flowers, arranged by height like a high school chorus. (In this garden-mad country I saw people jumping out of their cars to videotape other people's

flowers.) Most of the beautiful and interesting sites can be reached by car, so the sedentary aren't at any particular disadvantage. But there are also activities ranging from fishing to bicycling, scuba diving to skiing, bungee-jumping to pony-trekking.

All this makes up the everyday texture of touring New Zealand. The country has, as well, at least two stupendous natural wonders to give focus to an adventure: Milford Sound (a ten-mile-long fjord beneath mile-high Mitre Peak) and Mount Cook. These are in a league with the Grand Canyon and Yosemite, and an island nation the size of Colorado containing both of them, each in a national park, plus ten other substantial national parks is, well, some kind of fantasy land.

THAT, OF COURSE, is what visitors expect from New Zealand: a great outdoors, with a sparse but hospitable civilization superimposed on it. I had been told that the people are an attraction to rival the scenery, but because we were planning a hell-for-leather touring schedule, it seemed unlikely that we'd be able to be in touch with local people at all. Nonetheless, they made themselves known to us wherever we had time for them.

The host of the Cambria House bed-and-breakfast, in Nelson, a seaside town on the South Island, strolled out to our car as we were about to go looking for a place to have dinner, to invite us back into the kitchen for a glass of



wine with him and his wife. The Dutch proprietor of Grasshopper's Roadhouse, on the road between Auckland and the historic Northland region—which, to my surprise, reminded me of New England—came around the counter of his little lunchroom and gourmet shop to give us samples of his homemade Indonesian Sambal Oelek Wokfried (a hot sauce) and to sit down with us over coffee. A Maori shop attendant had been so eager to be able to explain the symbolism of a greenstone carving in his store that he had taken it to his elders for them to interpret. A pair of Air New Zealand flight attendants noticed me reading *The Bone People*, the winner of the 1985 Booker Prize, by the Maori writer Keri Hulme, and wanted to talk about it (both of them had given up in disgust at the grim theme that is revealed bit by bit, whereas I found the book riveting). These weren't the attention-starved, long-winded park-bench bores one learns to dodge in urban America. They were interesting, self-respecting, friendly people who for the most part worked in the tourist industry, and they patently enjoyed tourists.

Something no one had told me about was the fine food. In fact, Lonely Planet's *New Zealand*, a guidebook that is generally reliable and helpful, warns, "If you're expecting any sort of gastronomic highlights in New Zealand you may be in for a bit of a disappointment. Nowhere does New Zealand's solid English ancestry show through clearer than on the dining table." And yet right from the start, on our first night, when the host and hostess of the Cambria House, over that glass of wine in the kitchen, pointed us toward Appelman's restaurant (oysters in raspberry sauce, John Dory poached in wine with herbs), the food was sophisticated and terrific. We found sophisticated and terrific things to eat in other little towns, too—and even in places where there were no towns (I'm thinking of the Lake Moeraki Wilderness Lodge, on the west coast of the South Island, where I was served home-smoked salmon, venison stewed in red wine, and berry pie).

"It's like the fifties in New Zealand" was a partly affectionate, partly apologetic refrain I heard frequently before the trip—and on it, from New Zealanders, too. In some ways—even unto the occasional trampoline in a front yard—

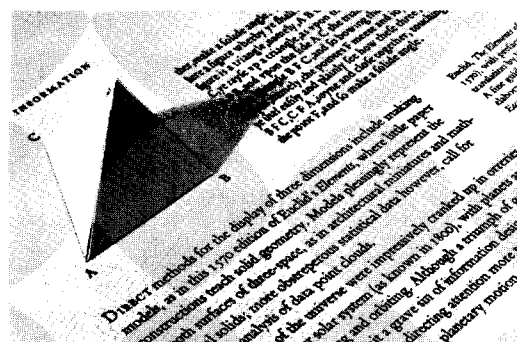
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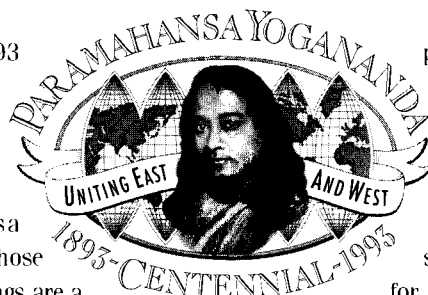
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it is like the fifties there. But New Zealand is not at all out of touch. The B&B in Nelson played music by the Irish singer Enya at breakfast. In the little lakeside town of Wanaka, I bought a spray-painted sweater that is the envy of the most fashionable of my friends. I might best make my point by describing the last evening of the trip. We spent it in Parnell, a district of Auckland known for its upscale shops and restaurants. For dinner we chose an eccentric, postmodern-looking restaurant, Ajo, which featured a roving trio with a Stephane Grappelli-style violinist. We ordered a bottle of Australian champagne and an assortment of little Asian and nouvelle European dishes to go with it. After the meal, somehow we started a conversation with a group of three women and two men at a corner table. They soon invited us to join them for a brandy, explaining that they'd spent the whole weekend in one another's company and wanted new people to talk to. They were worldly and opinionated, funny and kind, and the evening became almost a farewell party.

We were exhilarated when at last we walked out the door—and into another impromptu party. A restaurant nearby had hired a lively South American-sounding band for its “Tapas Night,” and the place was jammed with people dancing. The bandstand was next to the front windows, the windows were wide open, and people were spilling over onto the street, dancing in the warm February moonlight.

BEFORE THE trip I talked with helpful people at the New Zealand Tourism Board (800-388-5494). And I studied the guidebooks fanatically. Of the five I looked at, Lonely Planet's *New Zealand* and Moon Publications' *New Zealand Handbook* impressed me as far and away the best, even if they are both strongly budget-oriented. This is an unfortunate point of view on a country where everything is rather cheap and where middle-class Americans can easily afford, at least some of the time, to eat in the best restaurants in town. I packed both books and was glad I did, because they cover some different attractions and locales. A few useful things, though, I didn't learn until after arriving in New Zealand:

- Reservations to walk the Milford Track are perhaps the hottest ones go-

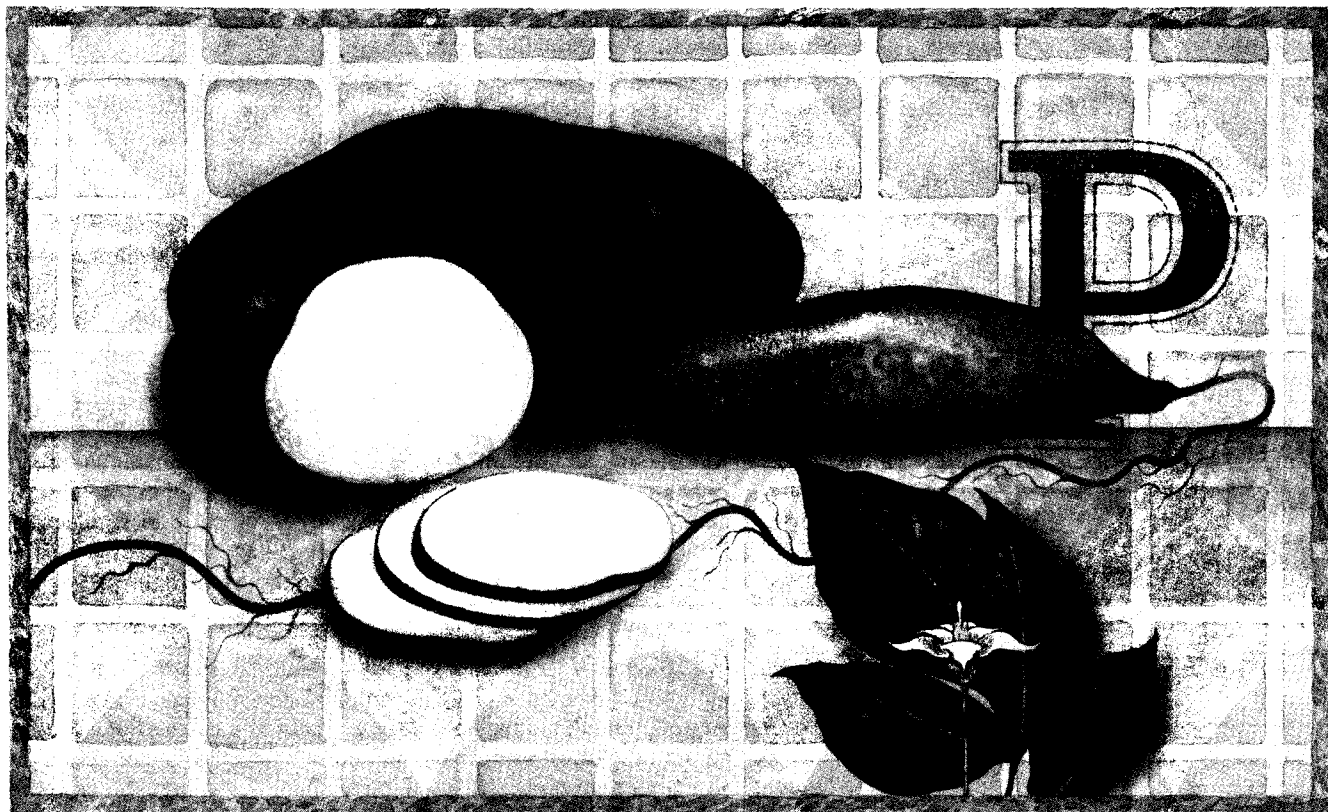
ing among tourists in New Zealand. People sign up many months in advance—and send in fat deposit checks—to take this four-day hike and stay in the shelters along the way (camping is forbidden). Nonetheless, we felt very sorry for a couple we met who had signed up and were now committed to trudging through an extremely buggy place for four days of what was turning out to be an almost continuously rainy week. In contrast, we had reservations for two nights in the THC Milford Hotel, on the sound. We took a Red Boat cruise, admired the waterfalls and the dolphins, and then, since the forecast called for more rain, left a day early. It rains a lot (more than 280 inches a year, or about twelve times as much as in London) around Milford Sound. In fact, it rains a lot in many of New Zealand's most beautiful places. Staying flexible is probably the best idea.

- If you're going to Mount Cook and you're pressed for time, skip the Franz Josef and Fox glaciers. Although a not very detailed map might imply that the drive from Mount Cook to the glaciers is short, it isn't. And the Mount Cook park overall is prettier and has a perfectly good glacier of its own, the Tasman. A highlight of our trip, in fact, was a “scenic overflight with snow landing” at the Tasman glacier.

- I have scarcely mentioned the cities because you would be ill-advised to travel so far to see them. They're pleasant but nowhere near as exceptional as New Zealand's countryside, and a visitor will see enough of them on the way to and from taking planes.

- Probably the worst time to visit during New Zealand's summer season is the week of December 25 through January 1, when a huge proportion of New Zealanders are on vacation and all the popular spots are crowded. A month later we didn't really need most of the hotel reservations we had (Mount Cook's Hermitage and the THC Milford being the exceptions). In two weeks the nearest thing to a crowd that we saw was two couples in front of us waiting to check in to The Hermitage.

Every night for two weeks we stayed in a different hotel. Every day we were sorry to leave the place we were in, whether it was a spectacular national park or a cozy town. Tolkien knew the feeling. “All that is gold does not glitter,” he wrote, and “not all those that wander are lost.” □



Small Potatoes

Heirloom varieties, being harvested this month, show how good potatoes can taste

by Corby Kummer

THE SUMMER before last, when I first became interested in the revived varieties of potatoes that chefs were pursuing avidly, I discovered two things. The first came as a surprise: potatoes are seasonal, like everything else that grows in the ground, and in most parts of North America the season is late September and October. Under the proper conditions potatoes keep for up to a year, which is why they seem as much a market staple as rice. But none of the varieties I was keen to taste had been grown in such quantity that ten months after the harvest there were any supplies to be found, so I had to shelve my research until fall.

Now that I've been able to taste many of the heirloom varieties that

have excited cooks—nearly two dozen kinds, more than even many growers have tasted—I've come to a new appreciation of potatoes. The best ones (and potatoes are by no means all memorable) have so much flavor that they seem like a new kind of vegetable, with a creamy flesh that is earthy, delicate, sweet, and even flowery. Although more local farmers are trying new varieties every year, if you can't find any of the "designer" potatoes—which are actually varieties that have been cultivated for as long as thousands of years—you can order them, at very reasonable prices, from farmers who have developed a new specialty.

The second discovery was something I knew vaguely but had never much thought about: potatoes fall into

two kingdoms—one for baking, one for boiling or steaming—and the two have very different cooking properties. Actually, the term "baking" potato is less accurate than it could be, because baking potatoes are good for mashing, too. Better terms for the two kingdoms are "high-starch" for baking potatoes and "low-starch" for boiling potatoes. "All-purpose" potatoes are medium-starch, and although they live up to their name, they're rarely the best potato for the job.

High-starch potatoes are flaky. When you cut into a baked potato (or, as certain epicures insist will keep the fluffiest texture, when you smash it open with your fist), it falls into irregular chunks. The flesh is mealy (the English, less pejoratively, call it "floury").

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This texture is needed for the lightest gnocchi, the little Italian dumplings served with pasta sauces, as well as for airy mashed potatoes. Many people prefer the flavor of mashed potatoes that are first baked, even though the final texture is smoother and the process quicker if you boil the potatoes. When you eat a baked potato, you usually mash it anyway, on the plate with a seasoning or topping.

A hundred and twenty years ago Luther Burbank lent his name to a high-starch potato, the russet Burbank, which is widely known as the Idaho although significant crops are also grown in Washington and Maine. Ever since, Burbank's variety—big, durable, utilitarian—has retained a virtual monopoly in the high-starch potato kingdom. I think that Idahos taste best rubbed with olive oil and baked in a 450° oven for at least an hour and fifteen minutes, so that the skin becomes nearly as dark and brittle as the crust of hearth-baked bread, and most of the moisture escapes, leaving the flesh light and crumbly. Strongly as I advocate microwave ovens, they do not do a creditable job of baking potatoes—the flesh can be leaden, and what's the point if you can't get a crusty skin? They are acceptable, though, for cooking Idahos to be mashed. (Cook them on paper towels to absorb moisture, following the timings in either of Barbara Kafka's two microwave books.) The savings in time can make the difference between having potatoes for dinner and not.

NO SMALL grower is trying to dethrone the mighty Burbank with some rare russet. Although a number of the revived varieties have floury flesh good for mashing, none that I found offers as thick a skin when baked. The action today is instead in low-starch potatoes, the firm, "waxy" kind that don't fall apart when sliced. A number of revived varieties, mostly from South America, the birthplace of the potato, have real flavor. They take the duty out of the little boiled potatoes that are requisite with fish, which too often are watery albino pellets from a can.

Rare varieties of potatoes are coming into fashion partly because chefs always compete to serve the newest and most exotic food, and lately "exotic" means anything grown by a small farmer—preferably organically and

preferably something associated with the food of the poor. Nutritionists and the politically correct insist that we take up rustic cuisines, which were of course determined not by connoisseurship and nutritional calculations but by geography and poverty. Michael Roberts, in his new *What's for Dinner?*, a funny and inventive collection of main-course recipes, to be published this winter, calls these dictatorial forces the "food police." They tell us to base our meals on carbohydrates, not meat.

Also, there has been great attention this year to the foods of the New World which changed the Old. It took Europeans two centuries to overcome their suspicion that potatoes were a poison (they are related to deadly nightshade, as are tomatoes, eggplant, and tobacco), a suspicion aggravated by the absence of the potato in the Bible. Once they did, they discovered that potatoes, which contain very high-quality protein (among the best not from an animal product, better even than soybeans) and significant amounts of vitamin C and minerals as well as filling, energizing carbohydrates, were a subsistence food capable of nourishing families over the winter. Indeed, they can take the place of meat as a main course, if you include a bit of yogurt, say, and salad greens or broccoli. Potatoes grow in virtually all kinds of climates, and are much more productive per acre than grains.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries potatoes allowed the European population to increase by a third. Ireland adopted potatoes earlier than the rest of Europe, because they were safe underground from the ravages of frequent invasions. Also, they were easier to grow in its soil than wheat. The Irish population almost tripled from 1754 to 1846. But dependence on potatoes could be dangerous: when a fungal blight resulted in the famine of 1845–1848, at least a million Irishmen died, and at least a million emigrated to America. Potatoes made wars easier to wage, because they can travel long distances without spoiling. (Good reading on how potatoes changed the world includes *The Great Hunger*, by Cecil Woodham-Smith, on the Irish famine, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato*, by Redcliffe Salaman, and *Seeds of Change*, by Henry Hobhouse.) Today the Russians and the Chinese are the world's leading potato growers.

Potatoes are being promoted as a way to feed and help develop the Third World as they once did Europe. Researchers are working on disease-resistant varieties, because potatoes are susceptible to hundreds of viruses, bacteria, and fungi. Much of the research is the scary genetic kind that has recently alarmed chefs and other purists, in which genes from, for example, a moth that produces antibiotics that combat bacteria that threaten potatoes are introduced into potatoes.

A potato is a tuber, a swollen stem that is like a root in that it lives underground and stores food and water, but unlike roots in that new shoots grow from buds, or eyes, anywhere on it. Potatoes are usually grown not from seeds (seeds rarely produce genetic duplicates of the original potato) but from cut-up tubers that contain at least two eyes; "seed potatoes" are simply potatoes that have been specially bred and are certified disease-free. Researchers are developing accurate, disease-resistant seeds that will vastly reduce growing costs.

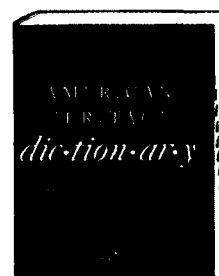
THE GENERIC name for the tastiest, in my opinion, of the revived varieties is "fingerling," borrowed from a term for young or small fish. In fact, the potatoes are roughly the shape of fingers, long and tapered, picked mature at anywhere from two to eight inches in length and half an inch to two inches in diameter. Fingerlings are low- to medium-starch potatoes. Most have a smooth texture akin to that of "waxy" boiling potatoes and even more closely akin to that of sweet potatoes. Good fingerlings are voluptuous on the tongue, almost like well-marbled beef filet. Many have yellow or orange-yellow flesh, which leads people to describe them as buttery even though only a very few actually taste anything like butter.

A widely available yellow-fleshed potato, although it is not technically a fingerling, is the yellow Finn, which a number of supermarkets carry. It combines some of the earthy, sweet, and creamy flavors that mark the best fingerlings, and is good steamed or, because it is higher in starch than most fingerlings, roasted in chunks. Steaming over simmering salted water is by far the best way to cook fingerlings and similar low-starch potatoes, because the flavor and texture show to their best advantage, and it's brief—a matter

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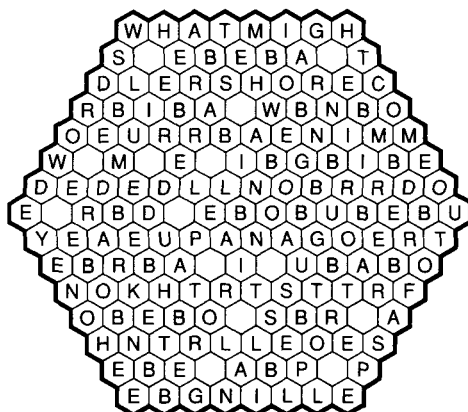
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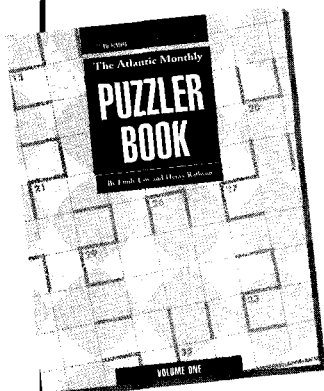
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of twenty minutes for most fingerlings, or until the flesh yields to a sharp knife.

I prefer steamed fingerlings peeled, since the peel adds little to their flavor and does not have a pleasing texture. This might not be the nutritional heresy it seems. Meredith Sayles Hughes, who operates a potato and food museum in New Mexico with her husband, E. Thomas Hughes, quotes Nell Mondy, a biochemist at Cornell University, as warning that toxic compounds build up in potato skin, which guards against pathogens. The skin does contain fiber, but many of the vaunted nutrients are in the layer just below it, which is why it's better to peel potatoes after they have been cooked: only the papery outer peel comes off. Scabs on potato skin, by the way, are harmless, but any green portion and all shoots should be trimmed.

The Yukon Gold, another yellow-fleshed potato, has also been widely distributed. I don't like it as much as the yellow Finn; it's an unremarkable boiling potato with none of the buttery taste claimed for it, and I would rather have a superior white boiling potato, such as the Rose Fir, from California. But Lydie Marshall, the French-born New York cooking teacher and author of the invaluable new *A Passion for Potatoes*, finds Yukon Golds more flavorful than white potatoes, and says that they have become her all-purpose potato.

Seed merchants have gone overboard in cultivating old varieties of colored potatoes, perhaps on the theory that if blue cornmeal sells as blue tortilla chips, purple potatoes can make arresting potato chips. They do. Potato chips rely on visual appeal, since the flavor comes from fat and salt. But I think that most purple potatoes cooked normally are terrible, with a negligible, watery flavor and an unpleasantly mealy consistency. Red and even red-and-white-striped potatoes are also pretty silly, with one exception, which bears the precious name of Cherries Jubilee. These potatoes have the shape of big cherry tomatoes and flesh that is vermilion streaked with white; they have a sweet, full flavor and a more floury texture than fingerlings.

Purple and blue potatoes are not worth going out of your way for, but some potatoes are worth ordering by mail, because if stored in a dark, cool place (ideally 40–50°) they will keep for months. The best source I've found

is Mountain Sweet Berry Farms, in Cooks Falls, New York (telephone 607-498-4666), where Richard Bishop and Franca Tantillo grow many kinds of heirloom potatoes. They sell them at the Union Square farmer's market, in New York City, and report that just before Thanksgiving last year they sold two thousand pounds of potatoes in one day. Bishop and Tantillo give their soil heavy doses of minerals and use no pesticides; for whatever reason, their potatoes have superior flavor.

Another farmer who will ship you potatoes is Chris Holmes, of New Penny Farm, Presque Isle, Maine (207-768-7551). Besides a few fingerlings he grows old New England varieties like Katahdin, Green Mountain, and Irish Cobbler, a high-starch potato. Like those from Mountain Sweet Berry Farms, his potatoes have not been sprayed, and they have a purer and stronger flavor.

One potato I counsel avoiding is Cowhorn (not a fingerling), named for its shape. It tastes like plain dirt rather than simply having the earthy overtone that is welcome. Peanut, a fingerling also named for its shape, seemed dull to me, and I detected none of the nuttiness that others apparently taste, probably swayed by the name.

My favorite fingerling is Ozette—long and thin, with an irregular tan skin. It tastes hearty and earthy, the way a potato should, and has a firm but melting texture. Almost as good is the red-skinned Ruby Crescent, Bishop and Tantillo's best-selling fingerling, which has caught on among New York's most fashionable chefs. Some gourmets go so far as to compare it to the *Ratte*, the most esteemed French variety. (As is so often the case with foods we envy the French—apples, bread flour, and coffee come to mind—we have more and better potatoes than they do, and we shouldn't go mooning after theirs.) The flavor is sweet but sharp, like that of a wild leek, and you could legitimately call the yellow flesh buttery. I also very much liked Banana (named for its shape and yellow flesh, not for its taste), a fingerling whose texture is a cross between floury and firm.

STEAMED fingerlings are wonderful in salads. I was delighted with a simple one I tried, starting with two pounds of steamed, peeled, and sliced potatoes, moistening the warm

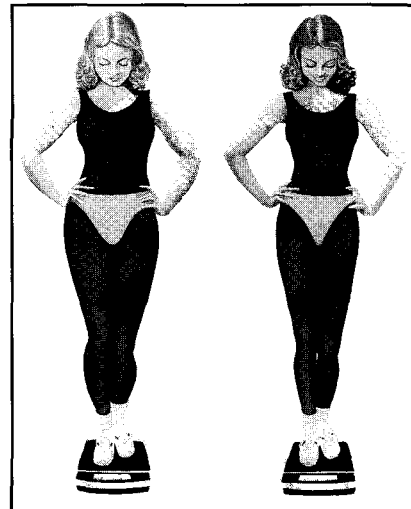
slices with three tablespoons of vinegar, and then tossing them with a cup of diced celery and two tablespoons of chopped scallions. For the dressing I whirled in a food processor a quarter cup of buttermilk and one cup of fromage blanc (a tangy, fat-free cheese that comes in containers like yogurt; if you can't find it, use a cup of plain yogurt and no buttermilk), two tablespoons of Dijon mustard, and a third of a cup of chopped green herbs—I included marjoram, thyme, and a few celery leaves.

Lydie Marshall gives a recipe for a salad with three pounds of potatoes, a quarter cup of minced chives, a cup of mayonnaise, salt, pepper, two cups of thinly sliced peeled cucumber, and a cup of thinly sliced red onion: she tosses the warm potato slices with two thirds of the cup of mayonnaise, the chives, salt, and pepper, and the cucumber slices with a quarter cup of mayonnaise, salt, and pepper. Then she layers the potatoes, the cucumbers, and the onions, tossed with the bit of mayonnaise remaining, in a glass bowl.

Both these salads improve after a day or two, and if they become too thick as the potatoes absorb moisture, you can thin them with buttermilk or mayonnaise. Walnut oil also goes very well with potatoes.

Barbara Kafka serves new potatoes braised in just butter (up to a half stick of butter or a quarter cup of olive oil to two pounds of potatoes), the pot kept tightly covered over medium heat and briskly shaken every few minutes to turn the potatoes. The potatoes will release enough liquid to make steam. This method, which the French call *à l'étuvée*, from a word for "sweatbox," will produce incomparable results with truly new potatoes, which are not a variety but any kind of immature potato, with skins so tender you can rub them off and a high sugar content—as in freshly picked peas and sweet corn, not all the sugar has turned to starch. New potatoes are usually available only in late summer. But any potatoes the size of big pebbles cooked this way will be succulent and richly moist, like round home fries; Kafka gives directions in *The Opinionated Palate*, her recent book of entertaining and provocative essays. The method lends credence to Lydie Marshall's cry that potatoes are a vegetable, not a starch. □

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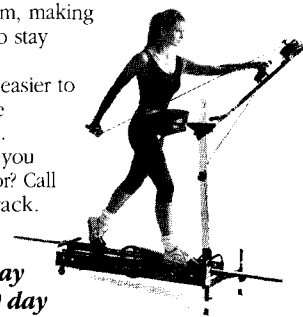
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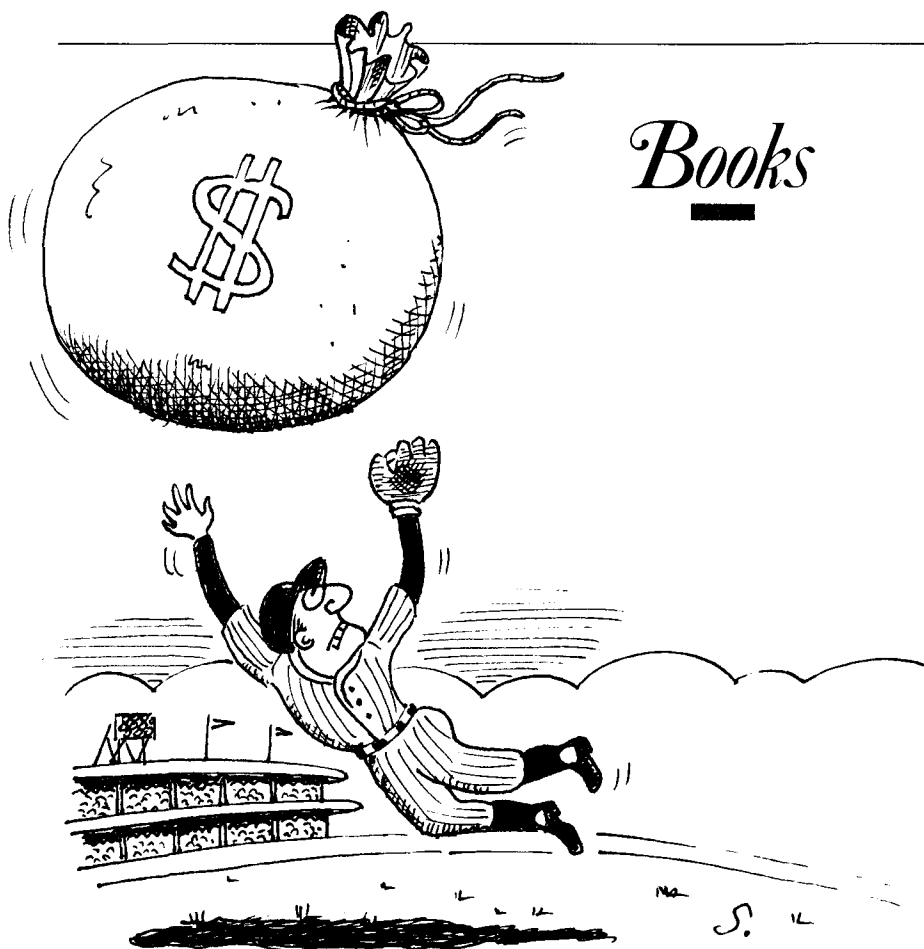
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BASEBALL AND BILLIONS:
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CLAR-EYED and coldhearted, *Baseball and Billions* offers blessed relief from the gooey coalescence of romantic pomp and statistical circumstance that so afflicts the vast parade of baseball books, most especially George Will's elephantine classic *Men at Work*, which read like Clausewitz's *On War*, except without the laughs. Andrew Zimbalist, an economics professor from Smith College, admits straightaway that he is a baseball fan, and he then does us a signal service by declining to write like one.

Rather, Zimbalist approaches the game as a peculiar part of the modern industry of mass entertainment. A le-

gally sanctioned, self-regulated monopoly, uniquely blessed in law in 1922 by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, baseball nonetheless has defined itself throughout its public history as being in constant financial peril. Zimbalist comes upon the sport during a conspicuously energetic spasm of management poor-mouthing. Indeed, he quotes the baseball commissioner, Fay Vincent, as saying that the sport is "poised for a catastrophe." Politely and in great detail, Zimbalist shows that Vincent is not being candid.

The case currently being made by baseball's management side (and, because Vincent is elected by the owners, that is where he belongs, his vaunted independence notwithstanding) is that spiraling players' salaries threaten to stall the sport's economic engine. With a drop in future national media revenues expected—CBS and ESPN together reportedly lost \$140 million on baseball broadcasts in 1990—management contends that it is facing an intolerable budget crunch, and that "small-market" teams like the Pittsburgh Pirates will fall irrevocably behind the Yankees and the Dodgers both on the field and in the countinghouse—and sooner or later the sport will go the way

of the silent film. The sub rosa argument made by management is that "overpaid" players are ruining the game.

This is not a new argument, but it has become unusually effective as the recession grinds on. In July an ESPN poll indicated that more than 80 percent of respondents believed that players' salaries were the primary cause of the rise in ticket prices for professional sports. This perception is immeasurably to management's advantage in future labor negotiations, which, if history is any guide, will be conducted with all the grace and courtesy of the Battle of the Boyne.

Zimbalist asks whether the crisis is a real one, and if not, why not. He deals tangentially with the question of players' salaries, but he wisely avoids the simplistic debate over whether or not baseball players are overpaid as a class—which is in any case a question for philosophers, not economists. (Who, truly, is overpaid? Is Kirby Puckett? Jack Nicholson? Manuel Lujan? Shamu?) The current level of compensation operates as a prism through which the quality of play is invariably distorted. If one tacitly accepts the premise that baseball players are wildly overcompensated, then every mistake is appraised at a greater cost, whereas excellence is seen merely as one half of an even bargain.

Yes, long-term contracts are probably a bad idea. Yes, salary arbitration probably needs some fine-tuning. Otherwise, looking strictly at the numbers, Zimbalist sees a remarkably healthy industry, one whose revenues nearly doubled from 1985 to 1990, topping out at \$1.4 billion, whose licensing revenues alone accounted for more than \$100 million, and which operates in a context devoid of any significant government regulation. Nevertheless, Zimbalist also sees an industry incapable of telling itself the truth on economic matters.

Zimbalist demonstrates that the profit-and-loss statements of the clubs are so thickly tangled with tax loopholes, depreciation programs, and accountants' finagling that the concept of

profit has no meaning. He quotes a Toronto Blue Jays executive as saying, "Anyone who quotes profits of a baseball club is missing the point. Under generally accepted accounting principles, I can turn a \$4 million profit into a \$2 million loss, and I can get every national accounting firm to agree with me."

THE METHODS abound. In 1982 the entity known as the New York Yankees paid George Steinbrenner III, their principal owner, \$2.4 million in interest, which was then deducted from the Yankees' book profits for that year. Two years later the Yankees reported a book loss of \$9 million, a sum that included hidden expenses from the team's Tampa hotel stay and twice the league average for travel expenses. Also in 1984 the Baltimore Orioles showed a profit of more than \$800,000, but this was after taking a \$2 million loss on what Zimbalist calls "stadium expenses for nonbaseball events." Even if the teams had been forthcoming with their books, there would seem to be no reason for Zimbalist to have believed what was written down in them.

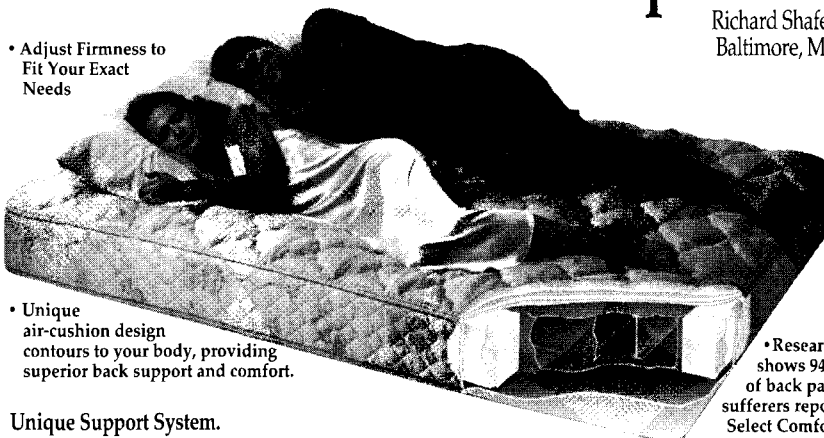
Accounting legerdemain also figures in the disparity between "small-market" and "large-market" teams. Generally considered one of baseball's most imperiled teams, the Pirates reported a book loss of \$7 million for 1990, although the team won its division and set an attendance record while doing so. Over the previous four years the Pirates' payroll had increased from \$6 million to \$15.5 million. The usual inference was drawn: "out-of-control" salaries were bringing the team to the brink of the abyss.

However, the 1990 Pirates were still amortizing their player contracts, having been last bought in 1985. This is partly how the Pirates were able to turn a profit into a book loss in both 1988 and 1989. Further, the team in 1989 set aside \$2.7 million of its share of major-league baseball's central fund against future penalties to be assessed as a result of the collusion against free agents in the mid-1980s, even though no collusion payments were due until 1991. "There is no economic justification for this accounting treatment," Zimbalist writes. "If the Pirates wanted to . . . put aside funds for a future liability, they could have taken their full income

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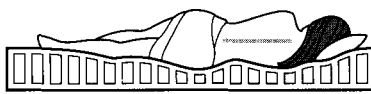
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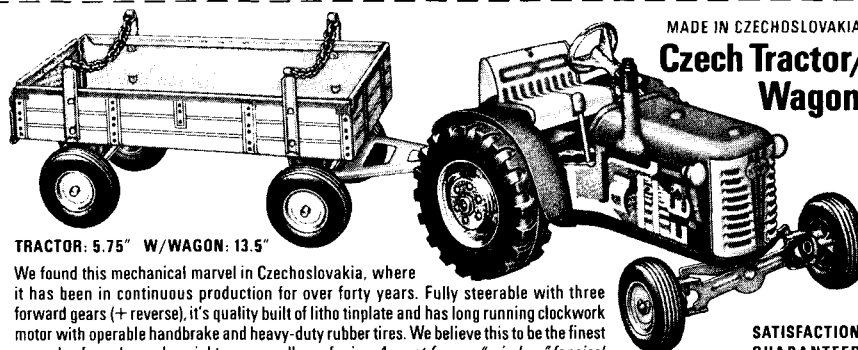
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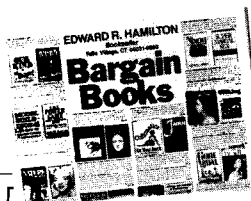
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from the MLB's central fund and invested it in U.S. Treasury Notes."

Thus the alleged \$7 million loss in 1990—and, by extension, the claim that the economics of baseball is killing the Pirates—becomes a phantom. By the end of that year the team had set aside \$8 million for the future collusion settlement, paying off its entire share a year before the payments were to begin and two years before they were due. And the team reported no licensing income for either 1989 or 1990, even though licensing fees are in fact baseball's most explosively profitable source of revenue, growing from \$200 million in 1987 to what is projected to be \$2 billion for 1991. In 1990, a year in which the Pirates' revenues grew by \$10 million and players' salaries by \$5.5 million, the team's reported book loss somehow grew by \$2.7 million.

ULTIMATELY, this kind of jiggery-pokery with the finances is possible because of baseball's unusual monopoly status. Indeed, as Zimbalist illustrates, many of baseball's chronic problems have their roots in the 1922 Supreme Court decision in *Federal League Club of Baltimore v. National League etc.* In it, Justice Holmes upheld the ruling that baseball was exempt from the antitrust laws because the sport did not engage in interstate commerce. The ruling was dubious then and is absurd now, especially since the coming of radio and television. However, it has been let stand, most recently in 1972, when it was upheld in the Curt Flood case on the narrow grounds of *stare decisis*, or precedent—even though Justice William O. Douglas admitted that he had erred in earlier decisions supporting the exemption.

The decision has clouded baseball's stormy labor-management history. It made possible the "reserve clause," which bound a player to one team virtually in perpetuity. Players and owners chewed over the reserve clause (and each other) for nearly ninety years before it finally fell apart in tatters, in the early 1970s. It accustomed management to a confrontational style of negotiation that persists to this day. And it has preserved what Zimbalist sees as the biggest stumbling block in the way of solving what financial problems baseball does have—the monopoly

control of the ultimate product, the game of professional baseball.

Unlike other professional sports, baseball rarely expands. From 1967 to the present the National Basketball Association has expanded from ten teams to twenty-seven, and some in the league are talking seriously about the possibility of expanding further, this time overseas. In that same period baseball has expanded from twenty teams to twenty-six, most recently last year, when the Colorado Rockies and the Florida Marlins were added to the National League.

The addition of the Rockies and the Marlins has brought not only a \$190 million windfall to the game in the form of expansion fees but also considerable new licensing revenues, a baseball cap for a team not yet in existence being the height of style in some quarters. This would seem to indicate that expansion is a good way for the game to increase its profits. However, baseball maintains that to expand is to dilute the talent pool and to overtax the game's finances. More likely, as Zimbalist indicates, baseball declines to expand so that the demand for franchises will continue to exceed the supply.

Historically, baseball has preferred to move existing teams around, transferring a limited supply into the markets most audibly clamorous with demand. Thus in 1957 the monopoly allowed Walter O'Malley to take the Dodgers west to Los Angeles, stripping Brooklyn of a good piece of its heart in the bargain, and in 1965 it allowed the Braves to follow the media dollars south to Atlanta, largely because the team's ownership was able to cook a loss out of the books during its last season in Milwaukee. (Even this matter was not beyond the long reach of Justice Holmes. After a Milwaukee court had ruled that the Braves could not move, the Wisconsin Supreme Court reversed the finding on the basis of the 1922 precedent.) By keeping the number of its franchises relatively stable, the sport is able not only to cut profitable deals with cities that want teams but also to wring lucrative concessions out of cities that already have them. Even though no team has moved since 1972, several have used the threat of doing so to good advantage in recent years. In 1991, brandishing Florida, the Chicago White Sox got

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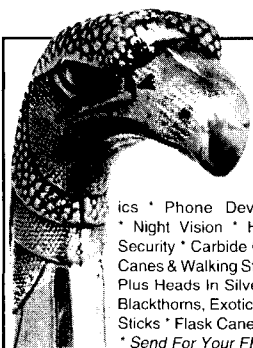
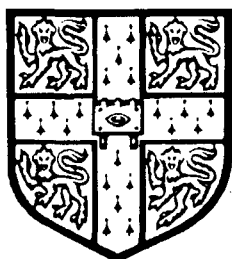
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both the state of Illinois and the city of Chicago to help them build the new Comiskey Park, including luxury boxes worth some \$5 million a year in new revenues. The city even assumed the total cost of compensating the residents whose homes would be lost in the construction. "They held us up," says a state representative quoted by Zimbalist.

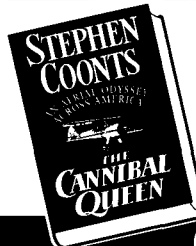
As long as the monopoly on the product is in place, baseball will continue to do business in the usual way. In fact, expansion is Zimbalist's remedy for most of baseball's real problems—notably the continued exploitation of players in the minor leagues. Despite the gaudy salaries of a few free agents, most professional baseball players—thirty-four hundred in all—play in the minors for subsistence wages, and do so with all the oppressive old management prerogatives still in place: no Marvin Miller has yet organized the minors. The average minor-leaguer is calculated to be worth one twenty-fifth of the average major-leaguer; forty years ago a minor-leaguer was worth a third as much as a major-leaguer—this even though the popularity of minor-league baseball has exploded. Ten years ago a franchise in Double-A (the mid-minors) could be had for \$100,000. Today it would sell for upwards of \$4 million. Little of this newfound profitability has trickled down to the players, who still sleep five to an apartment in places like Midland and Shreveport.

Let baseball expand, Zimbalist argues, and new major-league jobs will open up for these people. He cannot be accused of doing things by halves; he envisions forty-two teams playing major-league baseball by the year 2004. He finesses the question of the quality of play by stating that there is no empirical measurement for the quality of play—a somehow endearing admission from an economist.

If there is a problem with Zimbalist's approach, it is that there is more to baseball than simple economics. For example, even though a widespread expansion of the game might eliminate some of the worst aspects of the monopoly—the civic extortion, the exploitation of the minor-leaguers—it would be fought in the press and from within the baseball establishment by those elements who feel quite sincerely that any radical change in the struc-

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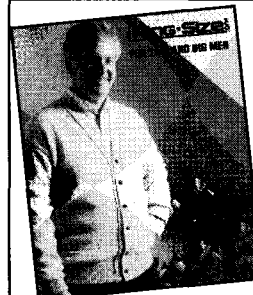
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What are the facts?

What is the purpose of the loan guarantees? For many years, it has been one of the major purposes of U.S. policy to persuade the former Soviet Union to allow free emigration of its citizens. Now that this lofty goal has finally been attained, the Jews of the country, its

most endangered minority, have opted in large numbers to leave. A good number have chosen to come to the United States. The great majority have chosen Israel as their new homeland. So far, about 400,000 have come; a total of 1 million to 1.5 million are expected over the next five years.

Israel has a population of 4 or 5 million. The expected immigration is equivalent to an increase of 50-75 million in the United States—more than the population of our three or four most populous states. These people arrive virtually penniless in Israel. All have to be fed, clothed, housed, educated, jobs have to be found, and infrastructure has to be created to accommodate this huge influx. The United States can take great pride in being an active participant in this humanitarian endeavor.

What will the loan guarantees cost the United States? Misinformation about the loan guarantees abounds. Israel gets *guarantees*—not loans or grants from the United States. It is equivalent to co-sign-

ing a note for a friend. No money will be transferred to Israel from the U.S. Treasury. There will be some "scoring." But the ultimate cost to the United States will be zero.

In its 40-year history, Israel has never defaulted on a loan. The credit guarantees will not increase the U.S. deficit, nor will they affect domestic programs in any way. The United States rou-

"The loan guarantees will not cost us anything...they will be of great economic benefit to the United States."

tinely grants such loan guarantees. Iraq was granted a \$5 billion guarantee just a few months before the outbreak of the Gulf War; about

\$600 billion in domestic guarantees and direct loans are expected to be granted by the U.S. within the next five years.

What's in it for the United States? The loan guarantees are essentially a humanitarian undertaking. But there will be substantial tangible benefits for the United States. Economic activity in Israel, as a result of this immigration, is projected to cause a surge of \$170 billion in imports over the next five years, at least \$30 billion of which is projected to be purchased in the United States. In addition, the U.S. taxpayer will benefit to the tune of several billion dollars from the servicing of the debt, most of which will be placed with U.S. banks. About 70% of the approximately 250,000 housing units required to shelter the immigrants will be purchased in the United States, at a cost of not less than \$5 billion. All of this will create tens of thousands of new U.S. jobs.

Israel's record as a major non-Nato ally is unique in a world of uncertainty and shifting alliances. Our national interest is served in strengthening this ally and in assisting it in the absorption of what may be as many as a million new immigrants. These immigrants will further strengthen the only democracy in the Middle East—politically, economically and militarily, and thus make even more valuable this outpost of Western civilization in an area in which the United States has such a vital stake. The United States can take great credit for the exodus of Jews from the former Soviet Union to Israel. We have assumed the moral obligation to see that migration succeed. The loan guarantees will not cost us anything; on the contrary, they will be of great economic benefit to the United States.

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ture of the game would be a disruption of memory, a break in the treasured continuity that reaches backward from José Canseco to the first game of catch that a father plays with his son. That romance is both real and binding; management uses it as a subtle tool in negotiations. It does not fall before facts and figures no matter how well argued. It is what there is in baseball that survives even the best efforts of the people who run the game. □

Lawrence Whole

by Anthony Burgess

SONS AND LOVERS

by D. H. Lawrence.

Cambridge University Press, \$24.95.

WE AND OUR parents (if they were literate) have been reading Lawrence's masterpiece in a truncated and bowdlerized form. After eighty years the Cambridge collected edition permits us to understand the title: we were always puzzled by the plural, because the oedipal situation of the story seemed to apply only to one son, Paul Morel; now we find two Oedipuses for the one Jocasta. Bowdlerization robbed us of passages like this:

Her breasts were heavy. He held one in each hand, like big fruits in their cups, and kissed them, fearfully. . . . Suddenly he saw her knees, and he dropped, kissing them passionately. She quivered. And then again, with his fingers on her sides, she quivered.

We believed Lawrence had written this:

He sat up and looked at the room in the darkness, his feet doubled under him, perfectly motionless, listening.

What he actually wrote was

He sat up and looked at the room in the darkness. Then he realised that there was a pair of her stockings on a chair. He got up stealthily, and put them on himself. Then he sat still, and knew he would have to have her. After that he sat erect on the bed, his feet doubled under him, perfectly motionless, listening.

The man responsible for the sanitization of *Sons and Lovers* as well as the excisions (about fifty pages), which both cleansed and rendered the novel sufficiently brief for public acceptance, was Edward Garnett, a reader for the British publishing firm of Duckworth and a dedicatee of the work. Lawrence desperately needed the £100 advance, and his gratitude that the book should be published at all outweighed his agony at the misrepresentation of his art. Garnett has a lot to answer for. He edited *Almayer's Folly* but earned Conrad's gratitude at getting the work into print. He rejected Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as "unconventional" and provoked Ezra Pound's vituperation. Virginia Woolf saw through him, but history has treated him kindly. A man who gets a book published, even if this entails partial misrepresentation of the author's intention, has to be a hero of sorts.

I think that the Anglo-American publishing tradition needs, at this point, to be taken to task. The editor, who lacks the creative gift but is compensated with artistic taste, has been overmuch lauded. Some of us would like to know what Thomas Wolfe wrote before Maxwell Perkins got hold of him, or what *Catch-22* was like before the editorial finesse of the former editor of *The New Yorker* licked it into shape. Editors never emend orchestral scores or panoramic paintings; why should the novelist be singled out as the one artist who doesn't understand his art? Anyway, it has taken a long time for the ravagings of Garnett, however well intentioned, to be canceled out, and we ought to be grateful that at last we can read entire one of the seminal novels of the century, however much we may rage at the unavoidable insufficiency of the critical assessments that some of us Laurentians have made in the interim.

IT WOULD BE OTIOSE to consider *Sons and Lovers*, as it were, from scratch. From a literary point of view it stands in a tradition we may term Edwardian, essaying none of the modernist tricks that the arch-modernist Joyce, three years older than Lawrence, would soon be ready to consider. It is realistic, but it very remarkably converts the realistic to the mythical, so that the characters take on a poetic life far above the exigencies of plain narrative. In this respect it is Hardy-esque.

The faculty for observation—the cover design of this edition reminds us that Lawrence had painterly ambitions—is highly idiosyncratic. But it is the theme itself that startled the book's first readers, and we are not yet so blasé as to be impervious to the shocks it imparts. Lawrence, as we know, eloped with Frieda Weekley, a German baroness who had read Freud, something few British intellectuals had yet done, and she knew all about the oedipal situation from its clinical aspect. But Lawrence had the Shakespearean faculty of intuitively recognizing the eternal truth of what Adlerians were to call family constellations, and he did not need Frieda's gleanings of Viennese theory. The book is based not on a theory but on a sharp-eyed direct knowledge of the sexual harmonics of a claustrophobic working-class household. The congratulations of the upper-class Freudians could come later.

The sexuality of the novel, apart from the hints of the incestuous, was a new thing in fiction, and it frightened Garnett, as it would have frightened an audience given it unedited. What makes Lawrence, dead of tuberculosis too young in 1930, an essentially modern, if not modernist, novelist is his awareness of the sexual impulse as an aspect of nature, not a diversion of the bourgeois bedroom. And yet this impulse is not philoprogenitive: it is important in itself, not a device for breeding. Lawrence had nothing of the paternal in him, and he was savage at Frieda's mourning for the children from whom her elopement had cut her off. She, in turn, mocked Lawrence when, in exile, he was working on *Sons and Lovers*, writing a skit called *Paul Morel, or His Mother's Darling*. The near-incest it depicts is unfulfilled and hence, unlike the classical Oedipus coupling, sterile. It seems that Lawrence himself was sterile and later impotent: the marital relationship was to be essentially a tempestuous duet, a hostile symbiosis that produced nothing except a kind of grand opera without music.

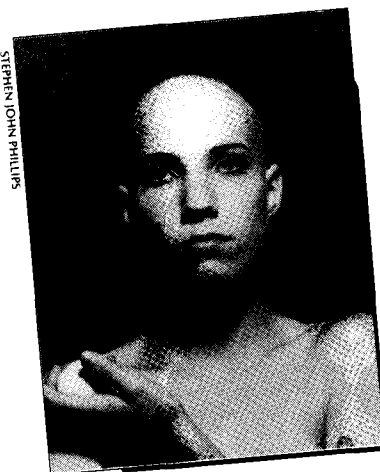
So, without benefit of contraceptives, the men and women in Lawrence's novels conduct erotic relationships complete in themselves. Lawrence was the first literary artist to emphasize the huge importance of sex as a means of human fulfillment, and here in *Sons and Lovers* there is an astonishingly frank (so at last we are permitted to know) delin-

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eation of its ecstasies and agonies. The frankness was to attain its limit in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, but it is there in *The Rainbow* and in *Women in Love* (banned or suppressed in their time, like the more notorious and far inferior swan song), raised to an epic-mythical level, so that mere human characters become priapic gods and infertile goddesses. But perhaps *Sons and Lovers* is the more profound in presenting the pains of sexual initiation, not the assured loves of the mature, with the chains of maternal possession rattling on every page. Lawrence did not yet know that this was to be characterized as a Jewish, and also a Latin, morbidity; it was there throughout the British working-class community, and he was probably right to intuit that it was universal.

We owe Lawrence much because of this sexual candor, a new thing in Anglo-American fiction, but we ought not to forget that he applied the irrational impulse of sex to life in general. He rejected the intellect. When assured that the doctrine of the earth's going round the sun was confirmed by science, he tapped his solar plexus and said, "I don't feel it *here*." He was a poet of the instincts, and he was convinced that instinct gave him the right to profess what it felt like to be a horse or a frog or a fish, to say nothing of a peach or a fig. He was bold, and this boldness drew him on occasion to total absurdity. But there is no absurdity in *Sons and Lovers*. It is, on the level of realism, an exact testament of British working-class life, the rebellious aspirations of the misfits, the power of the mother, and circumambient nature, made filthy by coal mines, which claims man and woman as part of itself.

To read *Sons and Lovers* as Lawrence wrote it is a revelation. The Cambridge edition is a masterly work of scholarship, and its clearing away of the negativities that presented the book as an acceptable dish for the neo-Georgians is an admirable act. The entire emerging edition of the Lawrence *oeuvre* is opening our eyes. If you have not yet read *Mr Noon*, the lost novel that the Cambridge editors produced several years ago, you ought to rush to it as the emanation of a more humorous, more self-deprecatory Lawrence than the bigger works will give you. It is a picture of the Paul Morel who has thrown off the chains and entered a free world. Meanwhile, there is this chronicle of a world striving for emancipation and not finding it. □

The Oriental Cure

by James S. Gordon

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"I'VE SEEN the past, and it works," James Reston exclaimed. The year was 1971, and the *New York Times* columnist was reporting from China on the acupuncture treatment that relieved his pain following an emergency appendectomy.

Reston's widely publicized enthusiasm and President Richard Nixon's visit to the mainland a year later whetted Americans' appetite for acupuncture, a healing technique that had been a central element of Chinese medicine for at least twenty-five hundred years. The reports that followed were equally glowing. Acupuncture was so powerful a pain reliever that major surgery could be performed on conscious patients with only a few carefully manipulated needles as anesthetic: newspapers published pictures of Chinese men and women happily sipping tea while surgeons probed their open chests. Delegations of health-care workers returned from the mainland with accounts of formerly deaf children who after a course of acupuncture could hear, and once-crippled arthritics who could now walk.

Over the next few years many Americans peered through the opening to China and saw in its medicine a mirror for our own hopes. Common curiosity dictated that we scrutinize reports of acupuncture cures of "incurable" illnesses. The political and social structure of health care was likewise intriguing: Chinese medicine relied to a significant degree on nonprofessionals—"barefoot doctors"—who were committed to service rather than to profits, and to prevention as well as to treatment. Others were drawn to acupuncture as a philosophical system and therapeutic practice in which mind and body were understood to be animated by a pervasive energy (the Chinese call it *Qi*, pronounced "chee"), which the practitioner assessed, guided, and bal-

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anced. Many of us—physicians and nonphysicians—were fascinated by the whole package: the Chinese were trying to synthesize ancient wisdom and modern technology and to put this wholly new and holistic practice at the service of the people.

We pursued our interest in a variety of ways. Reading the translations of Chinese medical papers caused us to be as skeptical as we were hopeful. The Chinese, with a billion souls to succor and the Cultural Revolution to survive, simply weren't interested in the carefully controlled double-blind studies that are the gold standard of American clinical investigation. Their journal articles had titles along the lines of "Three Thousand Cases of Bronchial Asthma Treated With Acupuncture." There were no controls, virtually no methodology, only the vast sprawl of urgent clinical experience. Hasty investigation of some of the apparent Chinese miracles led to even keener disappointment: the children's deafness could have been prevented by antibiotics commonly used in the West, so why explore the treatment? Initial studies revealed that arthritis didn't yield as easily to acupuncture in the United States as it did in China. And even acupuncture anesthesia, which clearly did work, seemed too labor-intensive and too unappealing to Westerners to merit much attention.

THE FIRST wave of enthusiasm crashed, but in its wake hundreds, perhaps thousands, of curious Americans began to take Chinese medicine seriously. Researchers found that acupuncture points were electrically different from surrounding tissue—they had lower resistance and higher electrical potential—and that they seemed to be located close to dense concentrations of nerve fibers and clusters of pressure and stretch receptors. These neurophysiological findings, the undeniable phenomenon of acupuncture anesthesia, and some remarkable studies of acupuncture's efficacy in veterinary medicine (I remember thinking that if acupuncture could clear up inflammatory disease in an ox's hooves, it surely wasn't a placebo) encouraged us to put a more optimistic construction on the clinical research. We understood the technique's shortcomings, but if 80 or 90 percent of the asthma patients actually experi-



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enced some relief, and if acupuncture had been dramatically helpful to arthritics—even if only to Chinese arthritics—these were reasons enough to learn about this therapeutic system and its potential utility.

But there were many obstacles to closer study. In the early 1970s no acupuncture schools existed in the United States. Many of the Asians who practiced within their own communities operated at the edge of the law, and were reluctant to draw official attention to their work or to take on Western students. Those who did often had difficulty communicating concepts and practices that were, even among Chinese-speakers in a traditional context, subtle and elusive. The available literature in English was even less satisfying. Ilza Veith's translation of *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*, the fundamental Chinese text, and Felix Mann's *Acupuncture*, the most widely available modern English handbook, were as frustrating as they were suggestive.

Still, what we learned led us on, to apprenticeships with established acupuncturists in a dozen U.S. Chinatowns, to schools of "Oriental Medicine" in Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, and Macao, and to teachers in Europe. There, alongside Western medicine, acupuncture had quietly flourished since the seventeenth century, when returning Jesuits brought the technique and its texts back from their missions to the East. Though some Americans studied in France and Germany, the largest group went to England, where the difficulty of immersing themselves in an alien system of thought and healing would not be compounded by coping with a foreign language. Among these students were Harriet Beinfeld and Efrem Korngold, the authors of *Between Heaven and Earth: A Guide to Chinese Medicine*.

BEINFELD and Korngold (Beinfeld is the primary author) began their acupuncture course with J. R. Worsley, the founder of the College of Traditional Chinese Acupuncture in England and a mentor to many hundreds of American students. They went on to study herbalism and the therapeutic use of foods with teachers in China and elsewhere. *Between Heaven and Earth* (the title refers to the central position of humankind in

the Chinese cosmology) is both a status report on the authors' evolving understanding of Chinese medicine and their attempt to transmute "wisdom from early China into what has relevance for us today."

The authors begin by presenting the fundamental concepts of the ancient Taoist world view and its medicine. They give a sense of the Tao, the way of being and the flow of living which the first Taoist sage, Lao-Tzu, said could not be described. They move on to some of the intersecting and overlapping ways this flow can be apprehended and used therapeutically by acupuncturists. Qi, they explain, is the "basic stuff," the "motive force" of all life, the engine of breathing, the essence of food, the Tao made manifest in the body. It is Qi that we balance with acupuncture needles, opening energetic pathways so that it can flow from areas of excess to areas of deficiency, stimulating or quieting as necessary. The Tao, and Qi, may also be divided into yin and yang; heaven, earth, and man; and the five phases or five elements.

Yin is female, old, reflective, solid, dark, and cold. Yang is male, young, active, hollow, light, and hot. Every natural process and organism has yin and yang aspects and attributes. They are at once opposite and complementary, constantly changing and transforming into each other, as day and night succeed each other. The five phases—earth, metal, water, wood, and fire—have yin and yang aspects and are themselves fundamental categories of experience. Each is associated with a direction, a season, a sound, a color, a time of day, bodily organs, and a psychological type. For example, metal, the element of fall, is characterized by the sound of crying; its emotions are apprehension and sorrow; its Qi is highest between 3:00 and 7:00 A.M., when its organs, the lung and colon, are functioning at their maximum strength. Metal "types" tend to restrict their emotions, and suffer when events elude their control. Interestingly, illnesses that reflect "an imbalance in metal" include asthma and colitis, conditions that Western psychosomatic researchers have also associated with apprehension, the suppression of emotions, and the need for control.

Qi, which animates all the phases and each phase's organs, may be divided as well into the fundamental sub-

stances—blood, moisture, and Qi. “Blood,” Beinfield summarizes, “governs tissue, the material form of the body. Moisture governs the internal environment, the body’s inner ocean. Qi governs the shape and activity of the body and its process of forming and organizing itself.” When these substances are depleted, excessive, or obstructed in their flow, illness may result. “Stagnant blood,” for example, is often diagnosed in menstrual cramping and clotting, and Qi deficiency is present in many chronic illnesses. Blood, moisture, and Qi are also subject to the influence of the five climates. These are pervasive internal states that correspond to the five seasons. (Late summer, associated with the element earth, is considered by the Chinese to be a fifth season.) If they are exaggerated, the resulting “adverse climates” may bring on the signs and symptoms of illness. Thus excessive wind, the climate of spring, may be the forerunner of a cold.

What I hope is becoming clear from this condensed summary, and what

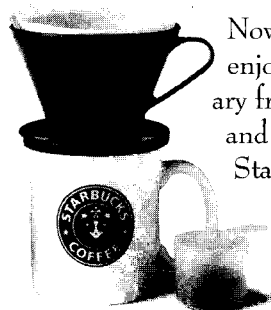
Beinfield and Korngold demonstrate at much greater length, is that Chinese medicine has a conceptual system entirely different from ours. Its various ways of comprehending the organism are interrelated through complex forms of association and feedback, and offer as rich and coherent a perspective as our own anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry. The first half of *Between Heaven and Earth* goes a long way to make this system and these correlations come alive for Westerners. Beinfield and Korngold include questionnaires that enable readers to locate themselves on the map of phases, organs, and substances. The second half offers a careful introduction to the acupuncture, herbal, and dietary treatment of the identified imbalances.

THE EXPLANATIONS in *Between Heaven and Earth* are carefully developed and the prose is clear. Unlike most earlier books on the subject, this one preserves a sense of the richness and complexity of the Chinese world view while conveying a

feeling for its practical application. There are, however, limitations. The sheer volume of information and the density of the text may intimidate some lay readers, and the lack of specific treatment protocols will disappoint practitioners. More important, whole areas that are integral to Chinese medicine—the therapeutic use of the moving meditation Tai Chi Chuan, Qi Gong breathing and visualization exercises, and massage—are left out, and the research literature on the biochemical and physiological effects of acupuncture is noted only in passing.

Though not disastrous, these omissions are important. Conveying a sense of the comprehensiveness of Chinese medicine is vital to an appreciation of this holistic system in which prevention is the priority. Though physicians must act as technicians, they are primarily teachers and sages. Their job is to help their patients to live in harmony with the Tao. Their methods are designed to free patients from the fixed patterns of thought, belief, and action which limit capacity for change and

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**FEMINISTS
AGAINST THE FIRST
AMENDMENT**
by Wendy Kaminer

The advocacy by some feminists of legislation that would outlaw pornography—however defined—is based, the author writes, “on the presumption that the link between pornography and sexual violence is clear, simple, and inexorable.” But, she argues, to claim that pornography causes rape is greatly to oversimplify the problem of sexual violence. And looking for a “quick fix” in the form of censorship may distract us from addressing “actual instead of metaphorical instruments of violence.”



**MEETING
THE QUEEN**
by E. S. Goldman

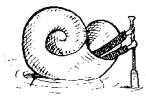
“The invitation to meet the Queen on the neutral ground of the Small Treasures Vaults was certainly not anything like an invitation to Usselton. It presented no issue of snobbery or sycophancy. Queens were scenic, like pyramids or cathedrals. If you were in their vicinity, you looked.” A short story.

growth. Their tools include storytelling and a variety of meditation techniques, Tai Chi Chuan, Qi Gong, and massage, along with acupuncture, diet, and herbs. It is a shame, too, that the authors lose this opportunity to note some of the more significant research that already exists, research that will whet the Western scientist's appetite for the Chinese world view and pave the way for further study and use of its techniques by mainstream physicians. For example, we now know that acupuncture releases mood-elevating endorphins, and that needling of appropriate points may improve the functioning of the immune system and of the lungs. Controlled clinical trials have already shown acupuncture's utility in treating such conditions as asthma, dysmenorrhea, chronic pain, and, most dramatically, addiction to alcohol and drugs. For example, one carefully controlled study on alcoholics showed that regular acupuncture treatment reduced both drinking episodes and readmission to detoxification programs by more than 50 percent.

IN 1971 acupuncture evoked extravagant hopes and easy denunciation. Twenty years later our science is beginning to elucidate its mechanisms, our clinical practice is making use of its methodology, and our conception of health and well-being is beginning to expand to accommodate its world view. We are learning that acupuncture and the other techniques of Chinese medicine can often complement Western medicine even when they can't replace it, and they can almost always contribute to personal and psychological well-being. These lessons have not been lost on present and prospective healers. There are currently some twenty schools of acupuncture and Chinese medicine in the United States. Seven to nine thousand acupuncturists, most of whom have taken rigorous national examinations, are licensed or registered in twenty-two states and the District of Columbia. The vast majority are nonphysicians, but the medical profession has become increasingly involved as well. Physicians are referring their patients to acupuncturists for chronic pain, anxiety, a variety of musculoskeletal problems, and neurological conditions that have proved refractory to conventional treatments. As many as two thousand doctors have themselves

become acupuncturists, and in some two hundred sites across the country—some of them large public hospitals that serve the poor—acupuncture has become one of the most acceptable and successful tools for easing alcohol, opiate, and cocaine withdrawal, and for reducing recidivism in all addictions. Acupuncture is coming of age in America. The appearance of *Between Heaven and Earth*, a successful introductory text, is a sign of its increasing maturity and a significant contribution to its further development. □

*Brief
Reviews*



BEFORE AND AFTER *by Rosellen Brown. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$21.00.* The setting of Ms. Brown's unusual crime novel is a small New Hampshire town where a Jewish sculptor and his pediatrician wife have been accepted as worthy citizens, although they do not belong to the rich summer crowd and of course can never become natives. When their son, who has previously been no more recalcitrant than the average teenage male, is accused of beating a girlfriend to death, everything changes. Friends disappear, enemies surface, the little sister lapses into surliness, and the parents hold incompatible views on how to deal with the situation. The Reisers are prosperous, capable, independent people who have never had a run-in with the law more serious than a parking ticket. They can superficially believe what is happening to them, but they cannot comprehend its juggernaut reality, and their bewildered struggles are like those of an animal in a trap. The reader will be absorbed and sympathetic and a bit frightened. There but . . .

EVELYN WAUGH: THE LATER YEARS 1939-1966 *by Martin Stannard. Norton, \$25.95.* The concluding volume of Mr. Stannard's life of the novelist is as fair-minded and expertly written as the



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first. It does everything that a fine biography should do—provides facts, anecdotes, and quotations, relates the subject's work to the events of his life, and, in short, sets Waugh before the reader with blood and bones and three dimensions. Unfortunately, there is no law ensuring that a distinguished novelist is also an agreeable man. Among selected friends and family members Waugh is credited with charm, generosity, and disarming gentleness. His biographer ruefully points out that "disarming gentleness" is not the stuff of anecdotes." The reader of Waugh's life must be prepared to spend several hours in the company of a verbal bully, religious bigot, and snob—a fellow one would not, in actuality, want in the house for ten minutes, unless he was writing a book.

NOTHING BUT BLUE SKIES by *Thomas McGuane*. Houghton Mifflin/Seymour Lawrence, \$21.95. Frank Copenhaver, Mr. McGuane's protagonist, is a successful businessman in a small Montana city until his wife abruptly leaves him. It is never clear why she bolts, but it is possibly out of middle-age rebellion, which is what, in another form, immediately strikes the deserted husband. He loses interest and his touch in financial matters, insults the wrong people, blunders into ludicrous sexual affairs, lands in jail for slapstick reasons, and inadvertently rides a hog through a pig show. He hashes up everything except fishing, and even his favorite, beautifully described, trout stream gets dammed up on him. The accumulating disasters are dourly comic and cannily satirical. The author's underlying theme is the unimportance of money by comparison with love, an old point that he makes with novel means and without sentimental sugar.

THE SCREENING OF HISTORY by *Gore Vidal*. Harvard, \$14.95. Mr. Vidal's provocative meditations on perceptions of history are based on his Massey Lectures, at Harvard. "I often believe," he announces on page one, "that I served at least one term as governor of Alaska; yet written histories do not confirm this belief. No matter." Written versions of history are, in Mr. Vidal's opinion, no more to be trusted than movie versions, and a lot less memorable besides being a lot less fun. Mr. Vidal is a movie-lover and a veteran observer of

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politicians and their histrionics. He relates history on the screen to the general concept of events, his personal experience, and his acerbic view of doings in Washington. He is witty and disrespectful, but politicians are not his only targets. School fund-raisers, "as shadows lengthen, circle one's head like buzzards. . . ." "The only reality required by popular fiction is that the description of luxury goods with brand-names be precisely rendered. . . ." Finally, as he approaches the topic of education, "I have always found it curious that the two things a human being must cope with all his life, his body and his money, are never explained to him at school. Few adults ever know where their liver is until too late."

PEOPLE OF THE SEA by Trude Dothan and Moshe Dothan. Macmillan, \$25.00. The Dothans, Israeli professors of archaeology, have worked for years on the remains of the Philistine culture. The Philistines, they maintain in this pleasantly informal report, were far from the barbarous oafs of biblical tradition. Who exactly they were remains a question, but what they made and how they lived and where they traded can be reconstructed in considerable detail. The authors mingle history, excavation finds, and personal experience in an informative account of a people who were, among other things, notably adaptable.

CARMICHAEL'S DOG by R. M. Koster. Norton, \$21.95. Mr. Koster has taken the notion that creative artists are driven by demonic possession and carried it to a point simultaneously literal and fantastic. Carmichael is a highly successful writer of science fiction, and he is inhabited by a legion of demons, one of whom (Odvar, of sloth) explains the catastrophe of the dog. Carmichael's troubles are in fact an excuse for the author's lively discussion of demonic possession as madness and of madness as art. "No one cares about madmen who haven't published, or murdered someone important, or misruled a country." Mr. Koster himself is mad, in a benign sense, about science fiction, and has quoted, misquoted, and borrowed from the genre wildly and impishly. Aficionados will find old friends on nearly every page.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

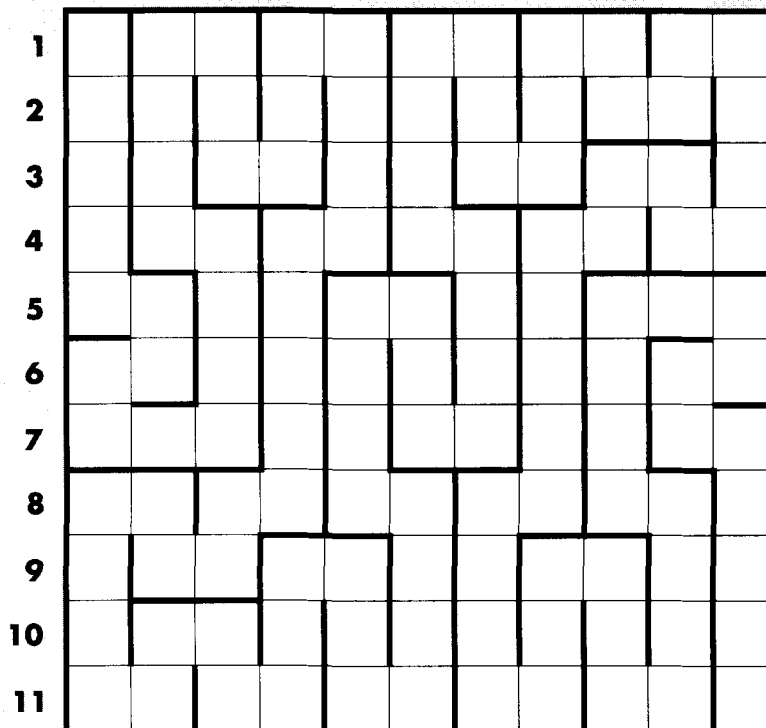
THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

AMAZEMENT

Each Across row accommodates two words totaling 11 letters; these words are clued in order. Meanwhile, a trail of 18 Maze words winds through the diagram from the upper left corner to the lower right. These words are clued in sequential order, but solvers will find that in 11 squares of the diagram the Maze words fail to intersect the Across words. Solvers are encouraged to circle the Across letters in these 11 cases; an appropriate phrase will result. Answers include six proper nouns.

See page 124 for Puzzler contest details. The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 110.



ACROSS

1. Journeys through first of twists and tangles (7)
Crack man (4)
2. Shorter person throwing? (5)
Top of peak in a row of high mountains (6)
3. Diminutive, like a young person? (5)
Eccentric bachelor's steps to music (6)
4. Some literature methods never initiated (4)
Cheap shot finally taken by cleric (7) (*hyphenated*)
5. Ignoring the tip, rate grass of a sort (4)
Man with a band in audition (7)
6. Governmental drug-fighting group runs expensive (4)
Drunk keeps broadcasting TV show (7)
7. Intricately pass through most of the study (6)

8. Took a horse out roping and bucking? (5)
8. Delicatessen product I'm sadly returning (6)
Direct hit at last in *Witness* (5)
9. Rent includes piece of this cake (5)
Enchantress in possession of large ring (6)
10. One who asked for a head start of sorts, running lame around loop (6)
Jazz pianist returned most of change (5)
11. Gets sharp with the new school (5)
Show how to get rid of some Scots? (6)

MAZE

- a. Famous on many levels? (7)
- b. Wheels back into the Balkan area (6)
- c. Painter of French showers (6)

- d. Each engine's starting—really (5)
- e. Speak of sequential flakes? (6)
- f. Cooks like getting into spoils (6)
- g. After win, sound beat (5)
- h. Bags containing masculine symbols (6)
- i. Turned frosty and made a marriage destroyed (9)
- j. Normal Navy on river going to the Caspian Sea (7)
- k. Flag left in cesspool (5)
- l. Land one behind the front of the jaw (5)
- m. Coin put inside something small, round, and green (6)
- n. Spanish area arranged in *History of Life* (6)
- o. Place to see, according to word of mouth (4)
- p. Trace newspaper's central piece of writing (8)
- q. Hem in red gingham (6)
- r. Idea of our opponents taking stuff of mine? (7)

NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.



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4TH CENTURY A.D.)

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T.S. Eliot
Margaret Atwood
Michael Crichton
Vladimir Nabokov
John Reed
e.e. cummings
Gertrude Stein
Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.
Henry Kissinger
Henry David Thoreau
Norman Mailer
George Santayana
Ellen Goodman
Daniel Ellsberg
Paul Volcker
Robert McNamara
Claude Pepper
Daniel P. Moynihan
Scott Turow
Esther Dyson
John Lithgow
Jack Lemmon
Ralph Bunche
George Plimpton
Yo Yo Ma



Horatio Alger
Robert Benchley
Robert Lowell
Marina Whitman
Robert Frost
Felix Frankfurter
Walter Lippman
Ogden Nash
Richard Whitney
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WORD WATCH

BY ANNE H. SOUKHANOV

Club Fed *noun, slang*, a minimum-security federal prison that has dormitories instead of cells; elaborate recreational facilities, including, in some instances, tennis courts; and no guard towers, fences, walls, or searchlights: "The very best thing that a federal judge can do to help your client get into *Club Fed* is to pick up the telephone and call the Director of the Bureau of Prisons . . . and then follow up that call with a detailed personal letter" (attorneys Alan Ellis and Alan J. Chaset in *The Champion*, a journal for criminal defense lawyers).

BACKGROUND: Getting into the "right" prison has for some people assumed the kind of importance associated in recent years with getting (or getting one's children) into the "right" schools, and similar sorts of string-pulling are often employed. With federal prison populations at record highs, well-heeled clients are increasingly turning to *post-conviction experts*—attorneys whose duties include encouraging judges to help get their clients into what one observer has dubbed the system's "top bunk." *Club Fed*, derived, of course, from *Club Med*, goes back at least to 1985 (and probably earlier): we have 138 citations for the term, most of them relating to celebrity inmates like Leona Helmsley and Billie Sol Estes. It joins a fat list of other slang terms for jail or prison, including *bastille*,

Here are a few of the words being tracked by the editors of The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition (Houghton Mifflin). A new word that exhibits sustained use may make its way into a future edition of the dictionary. The information below represents preliminary research.

big house, boob, bridewell, brig, bucket, calaboose, chokey, cooler, coop, cross-bar hotel, freezer, glasshouse, hoosegow, Joe Gurr, joint, jug, keep, lagging station, pen, pokey, quod, rock pile, skookum-house, slammer, squeezer, stir, stockade, tank, Texas steel, and up the river.

hi-pot or **Hi-Pot** *noun, slang*, a young executive with high potential for rapid advancement: "The *Hi-Pots*, as they are known, are shifted often into ever more demanding jobs, and their performance is reviewed by top management" (*Fortune*). **BACKGROUND:** *Hi-pot* has been a part of corporate nomenclature for at least three decades. It recently gained wider exposure in international news stories about an outside directors' coup at General Motors. During that shake-up—the largest in GM's modern history—the corporation's president and executive vice-president were demoted in favor of two former *hi-pots*.

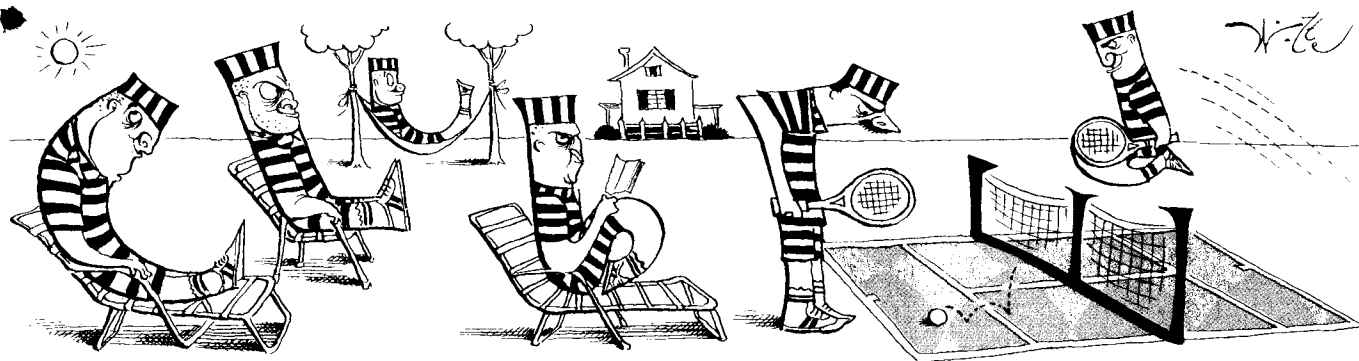
kangaroo care *noun*, a form of neonatal intensive care in which prolonged skin-to-skin contact between parent and infant supplements the usual life-sustaining medical technologies, such as respira-

tors, monitors, and feeding tubes: "'Kangaroo care'—mothers holding their premature infants all or part of each day instead of the babies being isolated in incubators—appears to be good for both parent and child" (*International Herald Tribune*).

BACKGROUND: The *kangaroo care* technique was developed about ten years ago in Colombia, in response to a severe shortage of incubators. When baby and parent *kangaroo*, they recline together for periods typically ranging from twenty minutes to six hours, and in some cases much longer. This contact is believed to help stabilize the infant's body temperature, promote steady weight gain, prevent apnea, reduce irritability, and increase maternal breast milk. Although detailed medical studies are still pending, a randomized trial at the University of Florida showed that premature babies who *kangarooed* continuously required, on average, only 3.7 days of hospitalization, whereas infants given traditional isolated treatment remained in the hospital for ten or more days. *Kangaroo care* has been practiced largely in the Third World, but is beginning to catch on in the United States and Europe as well.

zero-parent *adjective*, of, relating to, or being a family or child with parents who have been killed or jailed or who have disappeared: "With rare exceptions, two-parent families are good for children, one-parent families are bad, and *zero-parent* families are horrible" (William Raspberry in *The Washington Post*).

BACKGROUND: The *zero-parent* phenomenon, which typically arises from drug or alcohol abuse or violence, has exploded in recent decades. According to the U.S. Census, three percent of America's children were parentless in 1990. The result, in the words of one analyst, is "a new breed of American orphans," urban children who are shuttled between the homes of relatives, neighbors, and strangers. Some experts have called for the creation of a special system of orphanages for these children, similar to those built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to care for children orphaned by tuberculosis, diphtheria, and influenza epidemics. An early lexical warning of this crisis appeared in the mid-1980s with the emergence in print of *boarder baby*, a term that has now earned enough citations to be included in the dictionary: "an infant, often the offspring of drug addicts or AIDS victims, who remains for months, sometimes up to a year, at the hospital where he or she was born, waiting for placement in a home."



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Raking leaves wasn't exactly the way I wanted to spend Sunday afternoon. But after Linda brought out the Baileys and coffee, I warmed up to the idea immediately.



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